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The Washington Monthly

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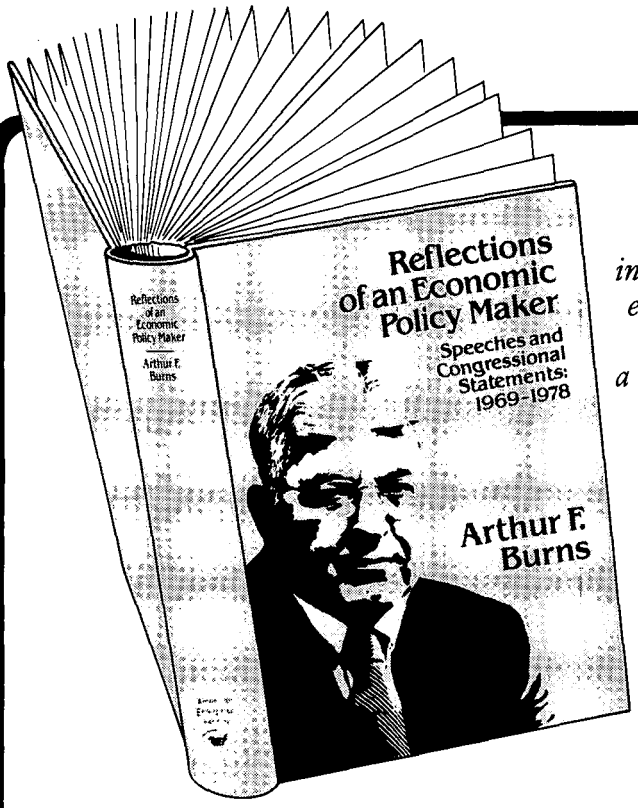

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Letters

Your story, "Abolish the SBA" [April, 1979], was a completely one-sided view of the Small Business Administration. As one who has had almost daily contact with SBA over the last three years on behalf of local community-based economic development efforts in Massachusetts, I have encountered a number of dedicated SBA officials who were sincerely interested in expanding employment and assisting the growth of small business. I too can relate horror stories involving red tape, unconscionable delays and an insensitivity to the needs of small business. However, I can relate similar stories involving insurance companies and other institutions in the private sector.

One program of SBA has created over 1,200 new jobs in three years in a fourteen community area south of Boston. Among the more than forty loan packages put together by this non-profit organization are successes involving projects that never would exist today were it not for the SBA's economic development program.

Surely SBA is ripe for an examination of its programs. However, let us not demoralize those individuals who have acted professionally and evidenced a sensitivity to the problems of small business in America.

HAROLD R. DAVIS
Boston, Massachusetts

Thank you for the thorough, thoughtful review of *Barbara Jordan: A Self-Portrait* [March, 1979].

I have one correction. I have never at any time worked in Jordan's office, officially or unofficially.

The woman you referred to as "de-facto administrative assistant," was Jordan's speech-writer, Nancy Earl.

I was in Austin at that time, working on the book.

SHELBY HEARON
Washington, D.C.

Shelby Hearon is co-author of Barbara Jordan: A Self-Portrait.

In your April "Tilting at Windmills" you expressed the view that journalism needs responsible reporting, with writers analyzing and interpreting the facts for their readers. I wholeheartedly concur. In analyzing the issue of finances and medicine, I am afraid you may have unintentionally misled your readers.

You pointed to *Private Practice* as an example of doctors focusing on fiscal matters rather than healing matters, and even noted that our February issue had "not a single article on medicine." You are correct. In the 11 years we have published the journal there has never been a clinical article in the magazine. We are a socio-economic journal, providing the physician with analyses and interpretations of financial and political issues of concern to them.

Doctors, like lawyers, magazine editors and other businessmen, need extra information on political and financial issues. Surely physicians are not to be restricted to only clinical reading. Doctors are offered an array of clinical publications—we simply don't compete with them.

TERRI T. BURKE
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Terri T. Burke is the assistant editor of Private Practice.

I am, to say the least, perplexed by the reference in the "Personality" section of your March issue. I found your article on the professional reputation of Margery Waxman to be utterly groundless. She was my choice as Executive Director for the Federal Trade Commission. For the year and a half we worked together, I saw every facet of her work. Her skills as a manager and a lawyer are truly impressive. I depended heavily on her support and advice since my appointment and deeply value our professional relationship.

Your column was simply incorrect.

MICHAEL PERTSCHUK
Washington, D.C.

Michael Pertschuk is chairman of the Federal Trade Commission.

Correction

In our sidebar to Fred Mann's article last month, we incorrectly reported that 125,000 barrels of oil had been stored as part of the Department of Energy's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Program. The correct figure is 80 million barrels, still far short of the 250 million barrels DOE was expected to have stored by now. The 125,000 figure represents the barrels of oil that can currently be pumped *out* of storage.

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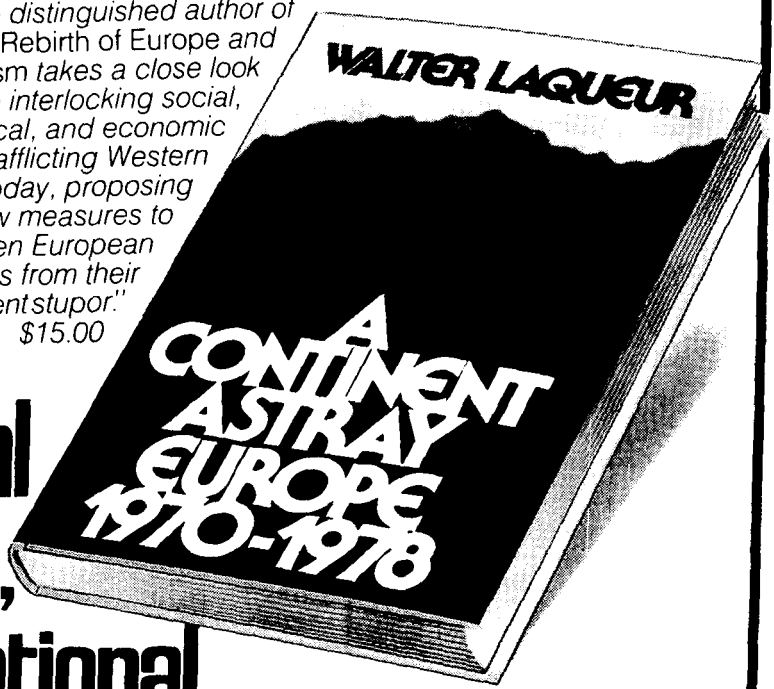

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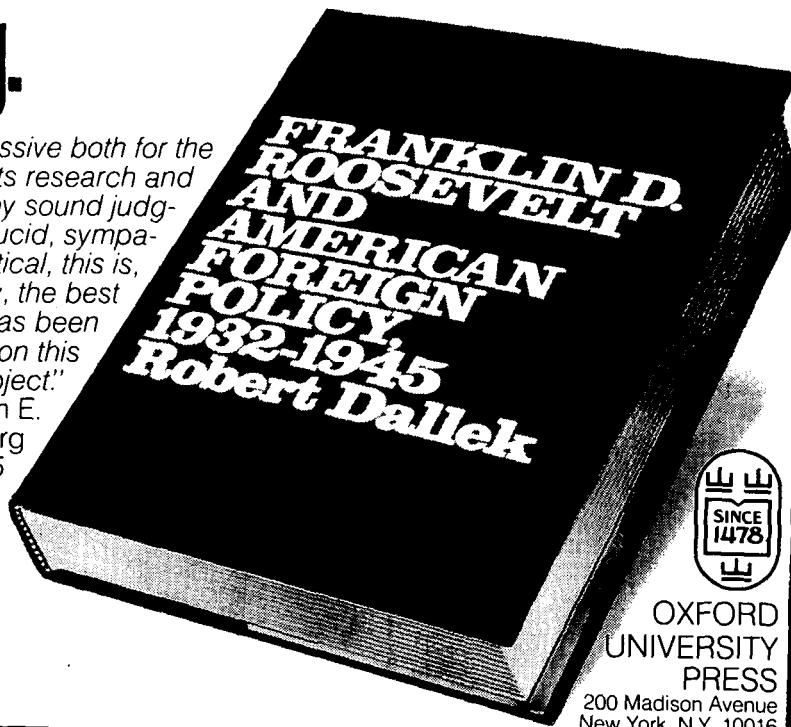

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Tilting at Windmills

Carter's gentle reaction to James Fallows' article in *The Atlantic* is another reminder of one of his best qualities, his freedom from the kind of hatred that twisted Nixon and Johnson. But his statement that Fallows "didn't say any of this to me while he worked here" was Carter at his worst. He was lying. Fallows had raised several of the points with him personally, including almost all of his criticism of Carter's speeches. But worse than the petty deceptions—which, while embarrassing, do not threaten the Republic—is the reason Carter didn't know of Fallows' other concerns about the administration. Carter has ignored one of the principal lessons of whatever success was enjoyed by FDR and JFK—he has failed to make use of his brightest employees outside of their assigned areas. Unlike Roosevelt with men like Hopkins, and later Kennedy with his brother and Ted Sorensen, he does not encourage comment from his staff on subjects not in their direct line of responsibility. He talked to Fallows about speeches, not about anything else. Never did he ask "what do you think about tax reform?" or "what do you think about energy?" Nor did he seek to find out indirectly what Fallows and the other thoughtful young people on the staff were thinking. Either Powell or Jordan or Eizenstat or Rafshoon could have told him about the complaints that Fallows later included in the article, for Fallows had told each of them about one or more of those complaints, and between them they had heard all the major points he raised in *The Atlantic.*

An example, one that would have saved the administration from a mistake that all its senior members now acknowledge, was an article Fallows wrote in December 1976. The article warned Carter that cabinet government would not work and argued that, if Carter really wanted to run the government, he would have to make sure he had a grip on what was going on down below.

Fallows showed the article to Eizenstat and his deputy, David Rubenstein, before publication. They did not react except to urge that it not be published under Fallows' name, so it appeared in the January 1977 issue of *The Washington Monthly* under my by-line. Fallows also gave the article to Hamilton Jordan, but the administration ignored his advice—at least they ignored it through 1977. But gradually they began to discover they weren't in control of the government, and they then spent most of 1978 trying to undo the damage that could have been prevented, had they listened to Fallows.

Having seen that he was right, did Carter's aides go to the President and say, "Fallows was right and we were wrong. Let's pay attention to Fallows"? Or did Carter have any other way of finding out that Fallows, or others who urged the same course, had been right while he and his advisers had been wrong? The answer to both questions is, of course, "no," which explains a lot about why the President is wrong so often.

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Another one of those puzzling minor lies from Carter: after only three months of jogging he says his pulse rate has dropped from 60 to 40. As experienced runners know, your pulse might decline ten points—but not more—after five years of steady jogging.... On the other hand, in our never-ending quest for balance, we want to rise in the President's behalf against Betty Beale of *The Washington Star*, who ominously reports that "President Carter's snub of foreign ambassadors is causing whispered grumbling throughout the diplomatic corps." Carter's outrageous sin, according to Beale, is that he is "the first President of the United States not to give a yearly reception, dinner, or whatever in peacetime for the ambassadors accredited to him.... During President Ford's administration the ambassadors were invited to two dancing parties in two years and they were beautiful affairs."... Is there a movement toward candor among business publications, a tendency to shed the kid gloves and say, "All right, men, here's what you really want to know." We can't say for sure, of course, but we can tell you that *Boardroom Reports* now promises inside tips on "How smart businessmen are winning tax deductions for money they spend on hobbies and the cost of getting to work each day" and "Legal ways to keep union organizers off your premises." My favorite, from *The Expatriate Investor,* is a special section of advice entitled "Extradition, Deportation, and Asylum."

My oft-stated suspicion that many Women's Libbers are imitating the worst in male culture has been fortified by a new organization, the National Association for Female Executives. It promises to tell its members "how to get prestige credit cards" and "the title you merit."... James Fallows' reference to Calvin Trillin (see page 11) reminded me of Trillin's article in the first issue of this magazine. It looked 20 years into the future, and began:

"WASHINGTON, Feb. 1—There was, of course, vehement response here to the report of the National Orthopedics Institute that 17 to 20 years of steady marijuana smoking tends to cause the average adult to walk on all fours. Within minutes of the report's release, the Crop Research and Health Foundation—the public relations arm of the marijuana industry—had accused the N.O.I. of confusing the public by 'spreading evidence that is strictly statistical...—the fact that people who have smoked marijuana for 17 to 20 years tend to walk on all fours and people who have not smoked marijuana for 17 to 20 years do not.' (The orthopedists, defending their research techniques, have maintained that, in the investigation of this particular phenomenon, animal experiments are bound to remain inconclusive.) It was clear that the Senate committee would give no support to the orthopedists' suggestion that marijuana packs be required to bear the warning, 'Continued smoking of this product might cause the average adult to walk on all fours.' Speaking to reporters after his testimony, Mr. Hawkins hinted that the industry might someday be willing to accept a compromise: 'Continued smoking of this product might cause the average adult to *think* he's walking on all fours.'

"... The men who had enough leverage to establish Public Law 849 as an unchallenged fact of American political life—what has come to be called 'permanent pot parity'—are not likely to sit by idly if restrictive legislation is introduced. Even proponents of advertising restrictions and compulsory health warnings concede that any setback in the marijuana industry would cause enormous economic dislocation in all of the states of the Great Grasslands. Probably never before in the history of American agriculture has commitment to one crop been so passionate, despite such warnings as Senator Orville Owens'

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'Cross of Grass' speech at the National Plowing Contest two years ago. Marijuana now accounts for approximately 94 per cent of Iowa's cultivated acreage—there is still some peyote left over from the filtered-peyote kingsize craze of three years ago. . . ."

There is a company in California that thinks the moment Trillin predicted is at hand: Applied Hydroponics of San Rafael is selling a product called the Hydropot, which, according to the company's owner, one Dave Berkman, makes it possible "for anyone to grow as much marijuana for their personal use as they want in a space the size of a closet." If you think Berkman may be partaking excessively of his own product, consider this recent bulletin from *UPI* in Sacramento: "Assemblyman Willie Brown, Jr.'s home cultivation bill. . . cleared the Criminal Justice Committee on a 5-4 vote March 12 and is awaiting a hearing date before the Ways and Means Committee."

I do not smoke marijuana, but I am a consumer of alcoholic beverages, and, as such, want to protest the conversion to the metric system. When the idea was first proposed, my world federalist sympathies had led me to conclude the switch was a harmless step toward world order. Now it is clear that the whole thing was engineered by the wine and liquor industry as part of its plot to give us ever less at ever higher prices. You now pay the same, or more, for a measly 1.5 litres as you used to pay for a half gallon. . . . The monthly hearing schedule of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee came too late for me to attend the April 30 hearing on "Adopt a Horse Program.". . .

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article by James M. Perry tells a story that is depressing in what it reveals about the White House, the Foreign Service, and journalism. It seems the White House, trying to curry favor with Jack Anderson, leaked a "secret" cable to him. The cable was from our ambassador to Rome, who, trying to curry favor with the White House, had reported what a great hit Miss Lillian had been during her visit to Italy. Anderson, trying to curry favor with the White House, used the item. . . . I want to join *The Washington Star*'s Philip Greer and Myron Kandel in a bit of shameless but deserved press-agentry on behalf of the moped, a bike with a motor. The thing about the moped is that it gets 130 miles to a gallon. One would think that the Department of Energy would be zealously promoting the prodigious energy-saver. Instead, the moped is mentioned by the DOE in only one piece of literature—and then only as part of one of 181 suggestions to improve the energy situation. . . . Leonel Castillo is the public official for whom we all should have the most sympathy. As the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, he is poised between pressures, on the one hand, from the right wing and the labor unions, who seem to want a steel fence along the border patrolled by killer dogs, and, on the other, from eccentrics like me who want to let all the aliens in because doing so is what made the country great. . . .

The Department of Energy has been requiring states to allow right turns on red lights, in order to save gas. The District of Columbia convinced the DOE that only a small percentage of its intersections were suitable for the "right turn on red" rule. But then came the tough decision. Would the District pay for 600 signs saying "Right Turn on Red Permitted," or 6,000 signs saying "No Right Turn on Red?" If you have followed our reports on the DOE and the D.C. government, you will already have guessed which choice was made, after several years of haggling between the two bodies: the District will buy the 6,000 signs, to be posted at 85 per cent of the city's intersections, at a cost of $375,000.

I've long admired the skill of those who write the annual reports of our

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great corporations. Here is the way Citicorp handled the accusations of an employee regarding the $100 million in profits it earned from pushing the dollar down and other foreign exchange dealings:

"Early in 1978 Mr. David Edwards, a former Citibank employee, alleged that Citibank was conducting its foreign exchange operations in a manner inconsistent with the exchange control and tax laws of several European countries. The Citibank Board of Directors requested outside counsel, Shearman & Sterling, to review Mr. Edwards' allegations and Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., as well as local counsel in various European countries, were retained to assist in the review.

"After approximately eight months of investigation, Shearman & Sterling submitted an extensive report which found no pattern of violation of foreign exchange or tax laws in the various countries reviewed, but that certain transactions had been identified which could be viewed as being in possible violation of local foreign exchange regulations or tax laws."

They really let it all hang out, don't they?...

The system of military commissaries—at which military personnel and retirees can purchase food for a third less than the rest of us—is based on the vision of an underpaid military serving at remote posts. The military is no longer underpaid, except in some foreign posts that have been adversely affected by devaluation—and, as Sandra Boodman points out in *The Washington Post*, the average commissary is within ten minutes' drive of a civilian supermarket.... How little writers understand about themselves was illustrated by a recent interview with Mario Puzo, in which he described *The Godfather* as an attack on the American capitalist system. He should read *Khruschev Remembers* for evidence that *The Godfather* was equally true of the Russian communist court under Joseph Stalin—or that, to the extent it was untrue, it was only because Vito Corleone had a benign and loyal side that Stalin did not possess. In any event, Puzo wrote a fine novel that was made into two movies that are even better than the book at depicting the paranoia that rules the world today....

When you read about the San Diego collision between a private plane and a commercial airliner, you may not have realized that what was unusual about the event was not that the private plane was in contact with a different air traffic controller than the airliner, but that it was in contact with *any* controller at all. When you look out the window of your commercial jet and see a private plane, the chances are that the plane is not required to be under a controller's supervision. That requirement exists only if it is flying above 18,000 feet, or if it is flying below 7,000 feet *and* is in the vicinity of one of the 21 major airports. The government is trying to do something about this, but, as usual, its effort, even if successful, will make only a small dent in the outrage: 44 more airports would be added to the below-7,000-feet group. The private pilot's magazine calls even this reform "The Government's Major Airspace Grab."...

There is one simple reform that I think would restore some candor to American government: put under oath all congressional testimony by executive branch witnesses. Ninety per cent of such testimony is not under oath today and 90 per cent of it is removed from the precise truth in degrees varying from the subtlest unconscious nuance to the grossest and most deliberate distortion.... Last month we told you about Amtrak's troubles. One reason for those troubles is the excessive manning of trains that is required by labor contracts. What an escape from those requirements could mean is illustrated by the experience of the Virginia and Maryland Railroad, which was formed to serve the Delmarva peninsula when the Penn

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Central went bankrupt. The new line was not stuck with the Pennsy's old labor contracts. One result is that the two tugboats that haul the train barges across Chesapeake Bay now have 12 workers instead of the 28 men used by the Penn Central. Overall, the line's deficit has been cut in half.... If you read Joseph Nocera's article last month about the dismal state of the District of Columbia schools you will be interested to know that, next to Alaska, the District has the highest per pupil costs in the country.... After the teachers' strike ended, there were supposed to be extra classes to help students catch up. But, according to *The Washington Post*'s Juan Williams, the classes are poorly organized and ill-attended. "The program of extra classes," Williams concluded, "appears to be principally helping teachers recover wages they lost while on strike instead of helping students to learn lessons they missed while their teachers were walking the picket lines."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is the highest paid agency in Washington, with about 30 per cent of its employees GS-15s or higher, averaging better than $40,000 in annual income. Another indication of the declining relationship between pay and performance.... If you've begun to worry a bit about the cost of public employees' retirement you will not find comfort in this report by Joseph Young of *The Washington Star:* "The top government official on federal and postal employee retirement benefits says the government has 'a contractual obligation to maintain government workers' present level of benefits.'"... Another cheering item of the "nothing can be done" variety comes from Larry Kramer of *The Washington Post*, who had this to say in the course of an article on the decline of the dollar:

"Some economists charged that although the dollar should have dropped during the 1976-78 period—perhaps because it was overvalued—the drop that did occur was sharply accentuated by speculators gambling that just such a drop would happen, and positioning themselves to profit from that drop.

"So as the dollar began to recover last fall, a new question popped up: What could be done to prevent the dollar from being victimized in such a manner again?

"The answer was frighteningly simple: nothing."

All of this once again made me wish we had some people thinking about world government. There was a burst of interest in the mid-forties, but the "one-world" movement quickly died—and its goals seemed so remote that members like Cord Meyer joined organizations like the CIA, I suppose in the hope of creating a secret world government under the benign guidance of Allen Dulles. Still, however inept the present international organizations may be, we have problems, like those surrounding world trade, that are only going to be solved by international organizations of some kind. Indeed, in another part of Kramer's article on the dollar, he asks Professor Charles Kindleberger of MIT about the tax havens set up by international banks in places like Nassau and Singapore, and gets this response: "Tax avoidance or evasion is a big problem. In the long run maybe we will have to internationalize taxes."

—*Charles Peters*

Answers to last month's puzzle:

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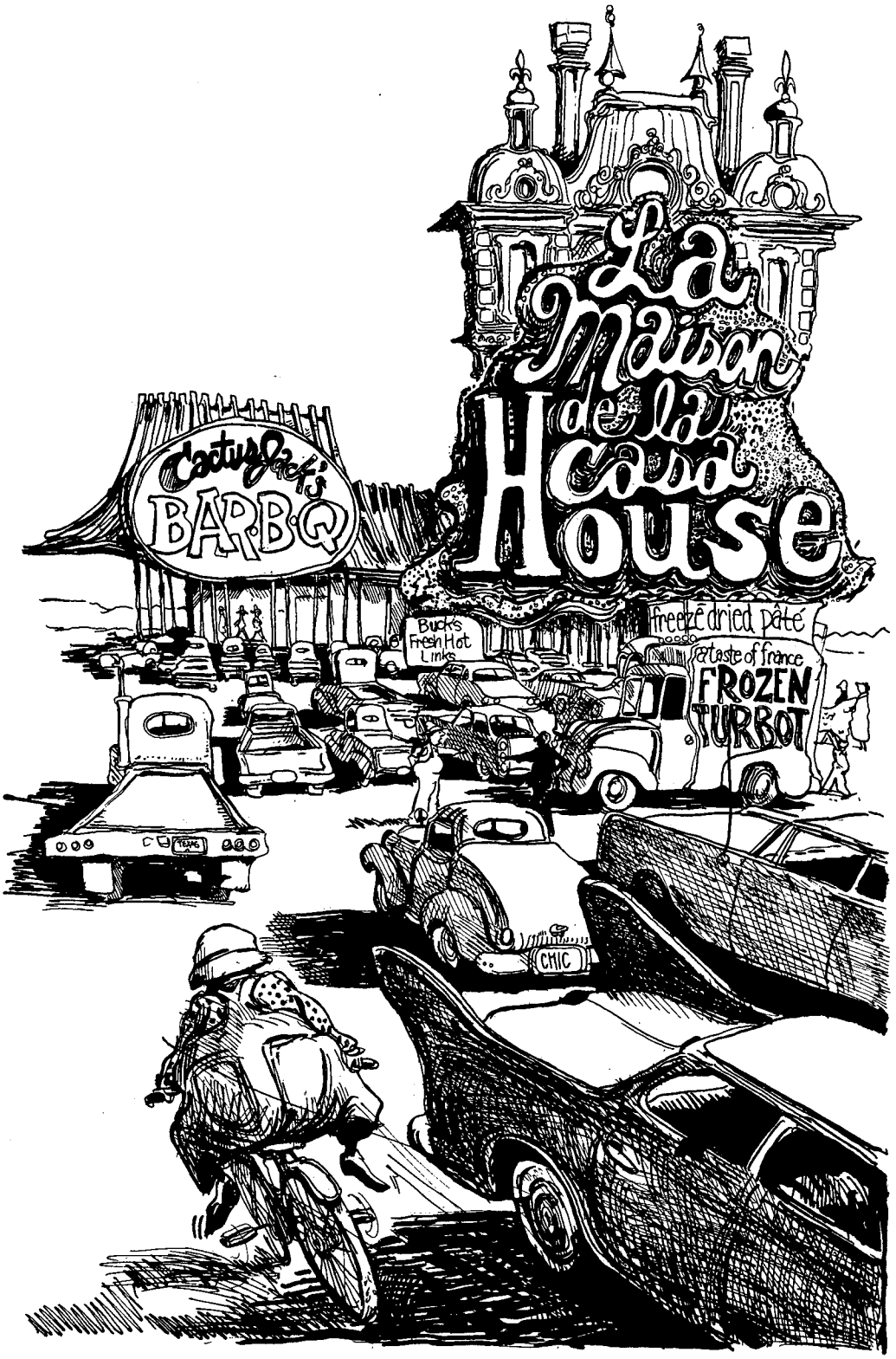

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Who's a Snob and Who's Not

by James Fallows

A few weeks ago, while leafing through the latest *Esquire*, I came across the sad tale of the demise of Studio 54. "All the poor slobs that couldn't get into New York's hot disco are soon going to be let in," the table of contents revealed. "And whom will they find inside? Themselves."

This seemed too good to miss. Inside, the author, one Taki, explained that "the bisexuals from the suburbs, the would-be beautiful people, the Biancas from the Bronx, the shameless celebrity spotters, and all the other twitchy-nosed nocturnal lowlifes who lay fruitless seige to the doors of Studio 54—to say nothing of the occasional full-fledged polyester duo from Cleveland or Atlanta—are about to have a pleasant surprise, followed by a not so pleasant one.

"The good news is that their long vigil is over. Soon they will be able to join the freaks, transvestites, groupies, and professional gays who at present are masquerading as the in crowd at Steve Rubell's version of capitalist decadence.

"The bad news is that the truly in crowd, those people who do not rely on PR men to place their names in tomorrow's gossip columns, has been staying away from the place as if it were Cambodia. . . . The news that a place is

James Fallows is the Washington editor of The Atlantic *and a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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no longer in travels slowly. The change comes as subtly as the aging process. By the time the not so beautiful ones find out, the glitterati are long gone. Then the game begins all over again. Carrot, stick, hope, humiliation, and finally disappointment. Ironically, a disco makes its greatest profits when the slobs are all allowed in at last."

What struck me as I read this was how unremarkable it seemed—how smoothly such naked, nose-thumbing snobbery has slipped into the literary and cultural world. That same *Esquire* carried John Simon's latest "Language" column, designed, like all the rest in the series, not to teach or inform, but rather to humiliate Simon's chosen victim in the most pettifogging way. In this installment, Simon's purpose was particularly ill-concealed, since his target was not misleading political rhetoric or mindless sociological folderol, but rather two books on English usage that were, Simon admitted, generally quite valuable. The authors of such works might have expected support from Simon, if concern about the language were really the reason that he writes. Instead, they too were subject to the brittle put-down.

This spring also saw a new edition of Nancy Mitford's "U and non-U" (the publisher, perfectly, was Debrett's Peerage). John Simon's linguistic discriminations, while mean-spirited, are at least correct, whereas Mitford's division of usage into U (upper class) and non-U (the sweating strivers) is entirely arbitrary, and therefore more effectively snobbish—and, while tongue-in-cheek on the surface, it is in deadly earnest underneath. H.B. Brooks-Baker, the managing director of Debrett's, helpfully explains in the introduction to the book that "Being U not only means that one speaks with the right accent, but it also means that a person must choose the right word or phrase." When "right" means *meat course* (from the American-U list) and "wrong" is *entree* (American non-U), or the English-U "expensive" trumps non-U "costly," we have reached the soul of snobbery, where the discriminations not only lack common sense but are deliberately divorced from it.

But the greatest recent snob story was that told last February by *The New Yorker*'s sainted John McPhee. His profile of the pseudonymous Chef Otto, who cooked the world's finest meals from the fastness of his country-inn retreat, got more attention than any other story in the magazine in years, because with the story McPhee threw down the snob's plainest challenge: I know a place better than the places you know. (A few weeks later, *The New Yorker* ran a William Hamilton cartoon, perhaps inspired by this very article, in which two urbane couples glared hotly across a restaurant table at each other, one of the men saying, "Look, Finnegan. The great meals you've had are no greater than the great meals we've had.") The general response to the story was that of the retaliatory put-down; Mimi Sheraton of *The New York Times* finally ran Chef Otto to earth somewhere in Pennsylvania, ate one of his meals, and then declared—aha!—that he too could be put down: the food was no good. This kind of twist must have been particularly painful for the chef whom McPhee quoted in observations such as these:

"Waiters are contemptible unless they prove they are not." This is McPhee speaking, who then quotes Otto. "'The less he can afford the meal, the more hostile he's going to be.' Otto once tried to correct a captain's pronunciation of 'Montrachet.' He said, 'Both t's are silent.'

"The captain said, 'No. One pronounces the first t.'

"'Are you French Canadian?' said Otto. . . .

"Otto says, 'They want to eat boring things. They actually want to eat stodgy stuff. Marinated mushrooms, you know, are for nowhere people. I serve baked potatoes because I'm tired of people saying I'm too cheap to serve them. They bitch if you give them something else.' He makes Swedish-fried potatoes, which are cut in

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ganglion strips and cooked in very hot fat, where they enmesh in a filament mass that comes up golden and crisp. Yet the nurdier clients want foil."

Amid all the nurds with their foil-wrapped potatoes and the slobs waiting outside Studio 54, there is a real question here: how the combination of the put-down and the fashionable pose became second nature in our modern cultural life. Calvin Trillin illustrated just how deeply those roots have sunk a few years back, in one of his *New Yorker* pieces collected in *American Fried*: "It is common for an American city to be vaguely embarrassed about its true delights. . . . In most American cities, a booster is likely to insist on defending the place to outsiders in terms of what he thinks of as the sophisticated standards of New York." In terms of restaurants, this means that the visitor will be steered away from the local barbecue or chili joint that may offer the best food in town and instead taken to a fancy French restaurant. "Its name will be something like La Maison de la Casa House, continental cuisine. The food will be continental, but will taste as if the continent they had in mind was Australia. What is saddest about a visitor sitting in the continental cuisine palace and chewing on what an honest menu would have identified as Frozen Duck a l'Orange Soda Pop is that he is likely to have passed a spectacular restaurant on the way over."

There is a touch of reverse snobbery even in the estimable Trillin (you top your friend's tales of the unspoiled village in Bhutan with yours about the unspoiled burger joint in Omaha), but in general he is preaching a gospel that should be more widely heard: that it is worth making sharp, cruel distinctions among things, as the snobs do, but unlike snobbish put-downs, they should be based on differences in quality, rather than on the simple desire to sneer. If you want to eat good food in most American towns, you should head for the barbecue stand or the home-cooking restaurant, because

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the food is simply better there than the reheated frozen fish at La Maison de la Casa House.

A Trait Worth Suppressing

Snobbery, of course, did not suddenly spring into existence with Chef Otto or even John Simon; to read about the Buddenbrook family, or Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice*, or the social circles that Thackeray's Becky Sharp and Stendhal's Julian Sorel strived to enter, or Raskolnikov's mother in *Crime and Punishment,* is to know that snobs worse than those now commonly observed bestrode the earth before Nancy Mitford uttered her first fruity vowel. But so, too, in the person of the Marquis de Sade did an inborn weakness of human nature reach its full flower, and still we consider sadism a trait worth suppressing. If snobbery is not new, it is nonetheless destructive, and it is worth looking into the roots of its current recrudescence.

The particular brand of snobbery (and its close relative, the fear of the put-down) that has given us La Maison... etc., all over the country seems at least partly a side effect of post-World War II affluence. Before the war, most French and Italian restaurants in this country were what Greek restaurants are today, and Indian restaurants were ten years ago: places to get good and sometimes excellent food at cheap prices in unpretentious settings. With the beginnings of mass travel to Europe after the war, people began to discover that not all French food was the same, that there were such things as three-star restaurants in Paris and their even-more-exclusive rivals in Lyons, that there were good and not-so-good places to get Florentine lacquerware or to rent a villa in Spain. Americans who visited Europe finally understood what the Europeans had in mind when they

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wrote about the undifferentiated and unhistorical American nation, where every gesture was not imbued with twelve centuries' worth of overtone and connotation, where people need not make their way by minute understanding of the gradations among families, places, cuisines. To understand these things was to know something that Mr. Normal back in Omaha did not know, and to take a substantial step toward one-upping your friends. In the forties in New York, an Italian restaurant named Barbetta's was like many others, serving cheap, good Italian food. After the war, Barbetta's daughter went to Vassar and then to Europe. When she got back and took over, she converted the place to "Northern Italian" cuisine, which no one had heard of before, and jacked the prices up a thousand per cent. (The same development is now underway in the Southwest. Within the last five years, most Mexican restaurants have had themselves redecorated, replaced the ceiling fans with central air conditioning, installed a piped-in music system, and switched from the Enchilada Dinner at $2.75 for a more refined and duller Chicken Mole for $10.)

This development in the world of the table coincided with a similar trend in the world of the mind. Much of the critical excitement of the late forties and early fifties, the sort generated by Lionel Trilling at Columbia and writers like Dwight MacDonald and Mary McCarthy at the *Partisan Review*, arose from the effort to reestablish distinctions, grapple with complexity, toughen up the lax critical standards of the previous years. Before this post-war movement, the meat-and-potatoes of American Lit courses had been Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought*, with its emphasis on good intentions and "realistic" effects, and its total abdication from distinctions about refinement or style. ("With aesthetic judgments I have not been greatly concerned," Parrington wrote in *Main Currents*, "but rather to understand what our fathers thought." He dismissed more ambitious sorts of criticism as "belletristic trifling.") *The New York Times Book Review* of the late forties, under J. Donald Adams, gushed about works in the fashion of today's Barbara Bannon reviews, its ambitions seemingly confined to

"When most people write about war or energy merely to strut their stuff or indulge a sneer, we end up laughing—taking our cue from Capote and Vidal—as the society burns.

encouraging authors and providing material for blurbs. (My high school library contained the abysmal novel *Of Many Men*, acquired on the strength of a 1946 *Times* review saying, "Not since Hemingway has the raw material of war been lifted so faithfully and completely unto the level of art. *Of Many Men* is unquestionably one of the really good novels of the war, possibly the best." Much later I discovered a more perceptive English review of the same book: "Even when we have the overwhelming courtesy to accept Mr. Aldridge's style as a means of communication, he appears to have nothing to communicate. . . .")

While Trilling labored to raise literary standards above those Adams enforced in the *Times*, Dwight MacDonald railed against the debasement of literature and thought he saw all about him in the fifties. He said that TV and the demands of mass production were driving down the culture available to the average man, that real literature was being destroyed by "packaged" classics, such as the Great Books series, and attempts to "modernize" such works as the Bible by converting the poetry of the King James version into graceless, featureless contemporary prose. While denouncing the Third Edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, which discarded such concepts as "proper" and "colloquial" or "illiterate" usage in favor of the nonjudgmental "standard" and "nonstandard," MacDonald quoted a linguist named Robert Hall as an

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example of the spirit behind the new "permissive" dictionaries: "A dictionary or grammar is not as good an authority for your own speech as the way you yourself speak."

Invaluable as efforts like Trilling's and MacDonald's were, they brought in their wake two less healthy traits. One was the cult of complexity, an esteem for refinement and formal sensibility above all else. Trilling revealed this most plainly in his contempt for Theodore Dreiser. In "Reality in America," the lead essay in *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling took Dreiser and Henry James as the two poles in American literature, and his preference for the more elegant, more difficult, less obvious James was clear. He complained that Parrington-style criticism ignored James' gifts because they lacked "any actual political use," while it excused Dreiser's stylistic crudities because of the social "realism" of his work. No doubt there is a human, and American, perception in James' elaborate late novels such as *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl* that eluded Dreiser's grasp. But Dreiser's insights, even though they were clumsy and obvious, were nonetheless true. Truest of all, for the America of the fifties, was Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, with its blunt, powerful portrayal of the yearning for money and the struggle to move and marry up. It was a breathtaking victory of refined style over substance for Trilling to put down Dreiser when he did; *The Liberal Imagination*, published in 1950, appeared in an era whose tensions Dreiser helped explain at least as profoundly as James. The emphasis on art for complexity's sake, on inaccessible works precisely because they yield up their treasures only to the serious student, ended up obscuring one of the main functions of literature, which is to convey basic truths about the society in which it is created.

A celebration of the complex also led to explanations that were needlessly obscure. In the introduction to *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling said that "In the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition." One wonders just what kind of "liberalism" it was that so dominated the country two years before McCarthy's heyday, one year before *God and Man at Yale*. In the context of Trilling's whole work, it is clear that he was talking about the absence of a conservative tradition in the classic, Burkean sense; but explained in this way, it repelled most readers, and rewarded only those who could congratulate themselves on understanding Trilling's allusion.

In MacDonald's case, the unwelcome element was his exultation in excluding the masses, the defining characteristic of the true snob. In his famous *Partisan Review* essay on "Masscult and Midcult," MacDonald, the one-time Trotskyist, made a polite bow to the cultural potential latent in the most lowly members of the human family, but his real argument was that fine culture will always be limited to a happy few, who must fight like crazy to keep their standards pure. Trilling made the same point in a 1946 *Partisan Review* essay, saying that "in actual fact the occasions are rare when the best literature becomes, as it were, folk literature, and generally speaking literature has always been carried on within small limits and under great difficulties." This argument led Trilling into the contortion of saying that Shakespeare, whose greatest gift is his accessibility, at different levels, to a universe of different readers, "had something of the aspect of the coterie poet."

The Politics of Snobbery

American culture has turned itself over several times in the decades since Trilling and MacDonald wrote those words, but their underlying attitudes—the emphasis on refined and sophisticated poses, the lack of interest in communicating with "the mass"—have left their mark. Most particularly, they are revealed in the snobbish inclination of our writers and thinkers to use

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public issues as an occasion for striking a pose or putting someone else down, rather than making serious attempts to analyze, inquire, and explain. This style of discussion is snobbish because of its deliberate disconnection from the substance of an issue and from the people who might want to hear an answer; it is dangerous not simply for the poison it spreads but also because of the time it wastes.

Viewed with even a modestly fresh eye, there is a staggering disproportion between problem and response in our intellectual and political world. On one side, we have a system of government that seems to reduce all presidents to helplessness or deception and all congressmen to petty self-protection; an energy predicament in which we drift toward reliance on nuclear power because it's the only fix available, and seem powerless to respond to the companies and nations that control our oil; inflation that is as immune to solution as unemployment seemed in the years before Keynes; a defense budget that seems to be determined by the whims of John Stennis, the dreams of Hyman Rickover, and the lessons of World War II, but not by hard analyses of the real threats to our security. On the other side, we have the professional thinkers and writers and politicians, the people who are supposedly in business to deal with questions such as these, but whose main interest in confronting them seems not to be to push for new answers or to evaluate the suggestions that are already on hand, but to use each new issue as a momentary platform upon which to display their deft cavorting, and from which to land a rabbit punch on someone else.

When loosing a bon mot against politicians in *The New York Review of Books* or chortling his way through a review of the current vulgar best sellers, Gore Vidal is more intent on turning the arch phrase than on presenting an idea; political ideas, especially, are for him mere excuses to display his exquisite moves. Garry Wills, who at times is one of the finest critics, too often seems to care more about including the extra quote and qualification that will prove his erudition than with making his meaning clear. (This is true, beyond point of parody, of William F. Buckley.) Nora Ephron, the literary equivalent of Steve Rubell, writes to demonstrate that she is one step ahead of fashion; ideas are as subsidiary to that purpose as providing warmth is to the outfits Rubell selects from the hordes in front of Studio 54. The political put-down artists—Emmett Tyrrell on the right, Alexander Cockburn on the left—can be vastly entertaining, but they care more about putting on a good show and blooding their swords than informing or understanding.

While writers like these are using politics and literature as ways of preening before an elite, those condemned to deal with the mass reveal snobbishness of a different sort. The assumption in politics and most mass-market journalism these days is that "the public" can't understand an issue unless all the complications are stripped away and the question is reduced to a clear, simple slogan. For the right, the current slogan is balancing the budget and Proposition 13; for the left (in the person of Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden) it is a rent-control initiative in California, which would come no closer to solving the housing problem than the balanced-budget amendment would to solving government waste. The main unit of political "thought" these days is the 700-word column, whose very design entices writers to raise problems and then kiss them goodbye with either a cliche judgment (Tom Wicker, Evans and Novak, Carl Rowan) or with the solemn observation that issues like inflation and energy are complicated, and the task of governing is difficult indeed in the post-industrial age (James Reston). The range of acceptable opinion in these columns is as depressingly narrow and familiar as that of the broadcast "confrontations" between Pat Buchanan and Tom Braden, or Shana Alexander and James J. Kilpatrick, the tired slogans of the left matched against their

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equivalents from the right, every idea and argument utterly predictable as soon as the subject is announced. The resulting exchange is either baldly snobbish—with each paragraph designed to put down the dimwits in the opposing camp—or more subtly snobbish—flaunting the pundit's ability to earn a living by dispensing the same banal wisdom your neighbor provides for free over the backyard fence.

When it comes to food and fashion, these attitudes do no serious harm; in the realm of literature, the pendulum will swing back and forth forever, periodically reassigning James and Dreiser their places of favor in the pantheon. But in public questions, of the sort most of these writers are discussing, the effects of the put-down and the pose can be grave. When most people write about war or money or energy merely to strut their stuff or indulge a sneer, we end up laughing—oh so cleverly, wickedly, taking our example from Capote and Vidal—as the society burns.

The Surrounded Outpost

I sometimes think of energy or inflation as a scene from World War II: the small platoon trapped in the jungle, surrounded by Japanese, searching for a way out. There is only one thought on the lieutenant's mind, and that is to find the one right route of escape. To do that, he must understand the situation in every detail of its complexity: that there are more Japanese on his right but that the left is blocked by a ridge; how many of the enemy have come down with malaria and how quickly they might be reinforced; whether his own bombers might attack the Japanese without destroying his own men; how his weapons and ammunition match up against those on the other side. When he *needs* an answer, he will not try to fool people with a slogan; to tell the troops that now it's time to separate the men from the boys will not help them escape. He will not make the situation needlessly complex, for he wants to draw on every single member of his platoon with a chance of providing an answer—but neither will he glibly simplify it, for an answer produced that way would be useless. The last thing he wants to do is use this as an occasion for sneering, for sneers would get in the way of survival.

That is what the lieutenant would do in the jungle. But how would some of our writers help him?

John Simon: With the gradual degradation of the gene pool, a fact these ferret-faced enlisted men make plain every day, it is hardly a surprise that vulgarities of language and thought grow steadily more frequent. One ill-favored corporal called the tree with a sniper in it a "goddam palm tree" when it was actually a subspecies of the tropical pineapple. When these tattered, greasy-locked men say "War is hell," they seem not to know the difference between *Inferno* and *Purgatorio;* from the looks of their crania, they do not possess sufficient brain space to contain such a distinction.

James Reston: The sun rises and it sets, the tides ebb and flow, and tomorrow, we may be sure, the sun will rise on this tired planet, now feeling the warm breath of springtime, once again. The Japanese have been fighting the Americans, and many men are reflecting seriously on the implications for the world-wide balance, and for the future of the Atlantic alliance. Whether they reflect in vain this mere reporter dares not say.

Pat Buchanan: When is somebody going to speak up for the fighting men in this country, always caught in traps with Japanese divisions shooting at them, and stop pandering to the naysayers of this country who are out of touch with American life?

Tom Braden: What makes me sick about you conservatives, Pat, is your refusal to face the hard fact that Republicans and big corporations got us into war.

Any politician: I've come to share with you my most basic feelings, as your leader, and as an American. We meet in the present, but we are shaped

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by our past, and we look toward our future. To some, that future contains clouds of doubt. Will we be able to escape the emplaced mortars? Will we be strong enough to avoid the rain of death from the skies? Will we pass on to our children a nation as strong and noble as the America we know today? I say we can—and I know we will, if we form a partnership, based on our common dream for a better tomorrow, and our knowledge that America is the greatest land on earth.

New York Review (pick your author): One of the lesser known figures of the *nouvelle vague*, Pierre Bonnard ("Bonne" to his friends, tantalizingly reminiscent of Proust's "Bonne Mere") expressed his sarcastic but nonetheless existential view of the anomie of his days with his famous question, *"Où sont les Japs?"* It is a question Nietzsche might have asked Dostoevski, and been answered this way—*"Die Japs sind in der wald"*—on the laughable assumption, of course, that the language of Schiller and Goethe could be *lingua franca* between these titans of the psychology of obsession.

Elizabeth Drew: I woke up. There were a lot of trees around. They had leaves on the top and roots on the bottom. I had coffee with cream for breakfast and put salt and pepper on my eggs. I wiped my mouth with a napkin. "Ouch," said one of the men when he bumped his head on a tree. "There are a lot of Japanese out there," said a man whose opinion I respect. "Yes," I replied.

Gore Vidal: Our slant-eyed friends lolled about the jungle doing whatever it is soldiers do to advance the interests of Dai Nippon. From the deliciously depraved glances they cast at each other's biceps and well-formed bottoms, it was clear that these happy samurai had recaptured the secret of the Spartan army's special snap. Alas, even the fondly remembered West Point of my boyhood (where my father was an instructor; by the way, I'm related to a lot of aristocrats) never overcame Empire America's slavish devotion to the missionary position. Is it too much to detect a conspiracy behind this omission, linking the Wheelchair Wonder in the White House and his partners of the Property Class behind their charade of disagreement that deceived all under the age of six? Hop to it, junior sleuths.

Instead of all the posing, all the one-upping and the fancy turns, we could use a kind of discussion that would strive for an alternative to the slogans served up by politicians and columnists, that would, to begin with, distinguish between the significant and the trivial (unlike Drew, who in her recent *New Yorker* profiles simply dumps her notebook onto the page, and leaves the reader to sift the worthwhile material from the details she should never have included.)

Most of all, we need discussions that operate from a principle of inclusion and human empathy rather than the desire to thumb the nose. When Mary McCarthy was working the Vietnam war beat, she wrote with withering contempt for those who "associated themselves" with the war effort—even though, at that very time, her husband was a member of the U.S. Foreign Service. If this complexity had been faced, rather than concealed, what better opportunity could there have been to understand why people "associated themselves" with a policy they deplored?

And, as important as empathy for the people who are written about, is empathy for those the writer is trying to reach. Where the question now in the writer's mind is "How can I screw my enemy?" and "How can I impress the reader?," it might better be how to understand what's on the other guy's mind, how to use a form of prose that conveys the full, clear message, acknowledges every complexity, but imposes no needless burdens by its own form.

In his whimsical way, Calvin Trillin did some of this in *American Fried*, but it is too easy to imagine what the put-down world will make of his revelation. Three years from now, there will be a La Maison de la Casa Barbecue in Manhattan, with Steve Rubell grinning at the door. ■

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Tidbits and Outrages

"We Are Driven" Dept.

The General Accounting Office recently reported from Europe that American "soldiers are used as drivers and are wasting considerable time chauffeuring vehicles and waiting for passengers." One driver, for example, was found to be spending 30 per cent of his time driving and the other 70 per cent doing nothing. But the Army is reforming. In Geoppingen, for example, regulations have been issued emphasizing a U-Drive-It policy for officers. Of course, everyone above the rank of major is exempted.

"I Never Said I Was Tough on Waste"

You remember Evelle Younger, the former California attorney general, who, when accused of Mafia connections, replied, "I never said I was tough on crime." He is now, according to AP, suing to increase his attorney general pension from $19,000 to $43,000. Younger collects three other government pensions, totaling $35,000 a year. A former California state treasurer whose top salary in office was $21,500 has just won a state Supreme Court ruling according him a pension of $33,000, under the same law invoked by Younger.

Not Athens

The *Spartan Daily* of San Jose State University reports that 7,500 books were destroyed by the school library because "state regulations are keeping the doomed volumes from being sold or given to any groups which may be interested in them."

A Good Meeting is Hard to Find

The New York Times has demonstrated its faith in corporate democracy and easy access for reporters by holding its 83rd annual meeting in Sanford, North Carolina. But the report that the meeting was held in the middle of the night is definitely not true, according to our sources.

Po' Boy Makes Good, Learns to Forget Past

"In 1937... farm life was much more similar to farm life in the time of Christ or the time of the Pharaohs thousands of years ago than it was similar to farming today... We had no indoor plumbing. We had no running water. We didn't have electricity until I was 14 years old. Our life was confined to a tiny community."

President Carter, in remarks made to the National Convention of the Future Farmers of America. November 9, 1978.

"Mrs. Stapleton tells us that in 1937 when her father drove her mother to the hospital to give birth to Billy, they rode in a brand-new Oldsmobile. She also says that just as a little 'love gift' Mr. Carter gave his wife $1,000 for producing another son."

From a review by Robert Sherrill of Brother Billy *by Ruth Carter Stapleton.*

But It Has Fine Corinthian Leather...

The State of California pays its legislators up to $220 a month so they can lease cars to drive on "state business." They are allowed to order new cars every two years, and this year's lineup may give an indication of how seriously the California representatives are taking the energy crisis and the threat of higher gasoline prices. Among the cars they chose for state subsidy, according to a survey by the *San Jose Mercury News*, are: a 1979 Oldsmobile Toronado Brougham (12 mpg); a 1979 Lincoln Continental Versailles (10 mpg); a 1979 Chrysler LeBaron (14 mpg); and a 1979 Pontiac Firebird, with optional 403 cubic-inch engine (13 mpg). Only one lawmaker chose a car that met the average 19 mpg fuel economy required of manufacturers. He drove a Honda Accord (24 mpg), but said he would have to turn it in because the legislature has a firm policy forbidding the leasing of foreign-made cars.

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"O.K., Everybody. Vote Yes": A Day in the Life of a State Legislator

by Larry Sonis

The phone beat my alarm clock in their daily contest to see which could wake me up first. I muttered a profanity, rubbed my eyes, and stumbled out of bed.

The West Virginia legislature was in session. And I was a member.

I shuffled across the floor and picked up the receiver. My elbow knocked a stack of printed House bills off the table.

"Larry?" the caller began excitedly. "I have to tell this to somebody. I shouldn't be talking to you. Something has to be done. Can we talk confidentially?"

"Sure," I told her automatically, not realizing in my half-sleep that I'd just given my word of honor to keep my mouth shut even if she were about to tell me that the Speaker, before his plastic surgery, was a Nazi war criminal.

She went on to explain how a statehouse telephone bank for "hotline" citizen complaints had been used regularly for long-distance calls in a political campaign. I caught a guilty glimpse of myself, using a state WATS line to call a personal friend in Atlanta.

When the woman finished her story, I advised her to notify the County Prosecutor's Office.

Now fully awake, I lapsed into my morning ritual. Coffee, orange juice, yogurt, and a perusal of *The Charleston Gazette*. I turned on the radio for background music and sat down on the couch.

Larry Sonis is a congressional aide. He served in the West Virginia state legislature from 1975 through 1978.

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An announcer on the radio was reading wire copy: "The House Finance Committee... public hearings today.... take the sales tax off food...."

I chuckled. Hell, the food tax removal was dead this year. But the leaders who had already decided to engineer the bill's funeral would make a big deal out of the public hearings on it anyway. Sincere witnesses would testify. A forum would be provided. And the bill would die.

Why bother? Well, I thought, the Legislature is part theater. Hold a hearing and people think you're doing something. A well-run hearing enables a politician to take a stand on principle while avoiding the necessity of a floor vote, which is perilously closer to meaningful action. The Legislature, I had learned, is chock full of neat tricks for avoiding commitment.

I finished scanning the *Gazette*, took a hurried shower, and opened the front door. There, on the doormat, was a bag of fruit, left by a neighbor with a complimentary note.

This was a phenomenon I'd noticed right after my election. It seems nearly everybody wants to play Santa Claus in the presence of a legislator. People buy you drinks at the bar. They give you garden vegetables and Christmas cookies. Their associations and businesses send you watch calendars, pens, paperweights, neckties, and cuff links.

I placed the fruit inside the door and went down the street to the bus stop. As I waited, a car drove by and slowed to a halt. I could see an arm inside the car waving me over. On the assumption that dangerous psychopaths don't lure their victims so brazenly, I bounded into the waiting auto.

Once inside, I realized I'd been picked up by a lobbyist for the auto dealers, who proceeded to tell me good-naturedly how he had been thoroughly destroying a bill of mine aimed at protecting consumers against auto repair ripoffs. An affable and savvy professional, he was able to tell me in so many words that he thought I was a jerk for sponsoring the bill, without angering me. He dropped me in front of the Capitol.

'That's Right'

I walked up the front stairs and into the large hallway next to the House of Delegates chamber. Outside the chamber, textbook protesters and teachers confronted each other. Kanawha County's schoolbook controversy had come to the Legislature.

A delegate approaching the chamber was stopped by a protester and shown a junior high school library book. "That's right," the delegate said. "We've got to get the filth out of the schools."

Moments later, the same delegate was stopped by a teacher who urged that the Legislature not bow down to the demands of the protesters. "That's right," the delegate said. "We've got to keep censorship out of the schools."

I walked into the chamber and strode down the aisle toward the Sergeant-at-Arms' quarters, a long room just behind the Speaker's podium. The chamber itself, ornate with its marble walls and plush, red carpeting, exudes grandeur, muddied here and there by one of the few remaining spitoons.

Waiting for me at my mailbox were four "approval slips," indicating that bills drafted by the Legislative Services Office were ready for me to sign and be introduced in my name.

I had put in my share of so-called "grandstand" bills, noble ideas with great purpose but a snowball's chance in hell of passing. As a freshmen, I introduced a "program" including the abolition of five constitutional offices, tax reforms, and the creation of bipartisan, independent commissions on ethics and elections.

I hoped they'd pass. I believed in them. But, in my heart and while staring into a mirror, I knew they weren't going to go anywhere at this session. I rationalized my introducing them on the grounds that they might at least generate some consideration and

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public awareness for the ideas they embodied. What they were sure to generate, however, was stacks of paper and hours of work for the well-paid attorneys who translated my "program" into statutory language.

Other grandstand bills were less pretentious than mine. One delegate, for example, submitted legislation to command expansion of the highway between Lens Creek, Drawdy, and Madison Mountains. He didn't tell his constituents that the House would never vote such a specific command—that the real way to get the highway fixed was through negotiation with the state highways department and adequate provision of money in its budget.

Duplicate bills, too, ate up dozens of hours in staff time. Perennials were tax relief and "sock it to the utilities" measures, which ended up being introduced separately by half a dozen delegates who distinguished their versions from each others' by changing a nonsubstantive word or two among their proposals.

After signing the approval slips, I left them on a desk where a per diem employee would show up later to carry them downstairs to Legislative Services.

I then walked to my desk in the chamber. Waiting for me there was a "meals and miscellaneous" expense form to sign. The expense money (around $15 a day—this was before the recent increase) was supposed to pay for a legislator's meals and job-related sundry expenses during the session. However, special interest groups picked up the tab for many dinners, and some lawmakers went ahead and claimed full expenses anyway. Furthermore, since we were given free stationery, free office supplies, and free secretarial help, it was difficult to fathom what "miscellaneous expenses" we might incur doing our jobs. But I signed the form.

A stenographer then appeared beside my desk and asked me if I'd like to get some mail "out of the way."

"Yeah," I said, "if you've got the time, now is fine."

We started knocking off the dictation in near record time. Most of the letters I was answering were mechanical queries, complaints, or exhortations, with contents that could have been expressed by checking a little box. I answered each one.

The stenographer then confided to me a story about a delegate who irritated a colleague of hers. The ambitious solon had taken it upon himself to personally respond to each and every person who had signed a petition of which he had received a xeroxed copy. He sent the secretary scurrying to the phone books to look up their addresses and prepare thank-you letters for each one. Since paper, postage, and printing expenses are paid by the taxpayers and charged to the Legislature as a whole—without a delegate-by-delegate breakdown—staff irritation was about the only disincentive to such extravagance.

As we neared the bottom of the stack of mail, I found the annual letter from the horse racing industry, offering me a share of the more than $100,000 worth

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of free track privileges it offers to lawmakers.

Finished with the mail, I walked across the hallway between the House and Senate and stopped briefly at the office of a friend. We started talking about the hot potatoes of the session, one of the hottest of which was abortion. I remembered a campaign rally at which the local chapter of the National Organization for Women asked legislative candidates to raise their hands if they would be willing to sponsor an abortion compliance bill. After the election, when they were recruiting a co-sponsor for the bill, NOW's lobbyists were told "no" by one of the handraisers.

My friend and I traded political gossip like two high school sophomores for a few more minutes, and then I headed back toward the House chamber for the 10 a.m. session.

On the way, I stopped by a House staff office and noticed that one staff member seemed irritated.

When she told me which legislator she was angry with, I guessed her complaint. He was a congenial soul, I was told, honest and considerate in almost every respect, except for one peculiar hangup. He was a kleptomaniac. This legislator had stopped by the staff member's desk a few minutes before me and, while standing there smiling and talking to her, had removed her scotch tape dispenser and put it in his coat.

By now, the bell had rung, signaling the start of the session. I quickly commiserated with the theft victim, and then hurried toward the chamber. The doors had closed, which meant the prayer was already under way.

'Take A Walk'

With a moment to spare, I paused and overheard several major lobbyists discussing a bill. One of them, a former legislator who knew most members and key staff personally, was frequently sought out because of his access and firsthand knowledge. Numerous ex-legislators in West Virginia have become valuable advocates for coal, banking, and other special interests following their terms of office. Why let a little thing like being soundly beaten at the polls keep you from helping to shape legislation for your fellow citizens?

Shortly before entering the chamber, I was pulled aside by a lobbyist interested in defeating a consumer protection bill. He told me he realized what my position was (opposite his), but he would appreciate it if I could "take a walk" so as not to be present to cast my disagreeable vote. He told me another delegate had promised him to do so, and he just needed a couple of other absentees to swing the margin his way.

I smiled and went inside. Just as predicted, when the vote on the bill was taken, I noticed the delegate who had promised to walk had indeed taken a walk. He conveniently reappeared after the vote.

Next came a crucial vote on a tax reform amendment. A normally liberal delegate came up to me and, apologetically, told me he wished he could vote with me but he had promised the "leadership" he would oppose the measure. For reasons of his own, he proceeded to vote against his own conscience. Subsequently, he was appointed to a major conference committee.

The food tax was still a hot item despite its inevitable defeat. At one point, a senior member ambled over to my desk to explain his opposition to the proposal. In true veteran-to-neophyte fashion, he lied about the state budget and its revenue estimates while maintaining a straight face.

Interestingly, as the "young turks" worked toward trying to get the tax relief measure approved on the floor, a colleague told me "they're booing" at Rockefeller for Governor Headquarters. John D. Rockefeller IV, who was then the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, favored the proposal. However, some of his coterie, wanting their man to get credit for the measure while in office, took a dim view of "prematurely" acting on it.

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The oddest debate on the food tax occurred on a motion to remove the bill from the reluctant Finance Committee and bring it to the floor for a vote. Several delegates who favored the food exemption nevertheless rose to their feet to denounce this "attack on the committee system."

In trying to understand how they could favor the tax relief bill but oppose the only motion which realistically might bring it to a vote, I conjured up a picture of a couple sitting on a front porch. "Ethel," the husband might say, "I'd sure like to see the tax off food." "Yes, Homer," the wife replied, "but, you know, we've got to uphold that committee system up there."

'OK, Everybody. Vote Yes.'

Among the other bills that were before us, pork barrels abounded. Literally millions of dollars were earmarked for a slew of goodies ranging from state funding for a national track and field hall of fame in Kanawha County to subsidizing a chronically flooded historical site. The projects were tied together politically into a coalition vote since none could easily survive on its own merits as a "priority" use of state tax dollars. Thus, as we prepared to vote on a pork barrel for Wood County, a Kanawha County delegate blurted out, "OK, everybody. Vote yes. Wood County is going for the Hall of Fame."

Less popular were the measures that threatened the time-honored customs of legislative patronage. For example, we were considering a motion to insist that the House adhere to its rules, which imposed a numerical ceiling on the number of staff jobs per session. Even the leadership had been embarrassed when it was discovered that more assistant doorkeepers were to be hired for the session than the House had doors.

After taking part in the anti-patronage revolt by pushing the motion, I was summoned into the office of a prominent leadership figure. "Won't you guys at least telegraph your shots in advance?" he asked me. "We could have worked something out if you'd come by first."

I left his office, and, outside in the hallway, I thought about how the Speaker and other legislative leaders get chosen by the Democratic caucus. A lot of it depends on who promises what to whom. The supporters of one candidate for speaker had offered me a committee chairmanship and a Finance Committee slot if only I would vote for their guy.

I continued walking and soon arrived at my first committee meeting.

The chairman began the meeting by stating that we would take up a bill the Speaker wanted considered.

"What is it?" a delegate asked.

"Uh," the chairman replied, "well, it's... uh... what it would do... well, the Speaker wants it."

Another committee member then bailed the chairman out and explained the bill, which was harmless enough. It passed despite the chairman's ignorance of its content.

Shortly thereafter, another delegate entered the room to tell us he had introduced one bill just to placate a constituent—and would we please help him out by killing his bill. The committee obliged him, but not until a few members speculated on how funny it would be to send his bill to the floor and watch him squirm. The committee adjourned for lunch.

Lunch was short. I ate at my chamber desk in about ten minutes. During the meal, a senior member of the permanent House staff came up to my desk and lavished praise on the "fine work" I was doing and told me how much he admired my floor speeches and public statements. Moments later, I overheard him asking a nearby colleague of mine, "You think you can keep Sonis quiet this session?"

The Democratic caucus, closed to the public as usual, was held around 12:30 that afternoon. Inside, delegates loosened their ties and spoke candidly about a pending teacher pay raise. A show of hands indicated a pay raise would pass by a narrow margin.

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Later, when the Legislature went public again, the teacher pay raise sailed through the House by an overwhelming majority. One delegate who had opposed the raise in the private caucus spoke to a group of teachers outside, taking partial credit for the victory.

Heart-to-Heart Talk

On the way to my afternoon committee meeting, a normally aloof delegate approached me with an earnest look. "Uh-oh," I thought. He told me he had information that a colleague had pushed for an item in the state budget to upgrade a park facility that happened to be located near a motel in which the colleague had an interest. "Why don't you embarrass him on the floor?" the delegate asked, handing me a scrawled note and adding, "Think about it."

I walked upstairs to the committee meeting and joined a half dozen or so other delegates. When a quorum didn't materialize, we disbanded. A few of the more diligent members grumbled about the Legislature's prevailing work habits.

After the attempted meeting, the chairman of a major committee, who noticed I had been voting with his antagonist lately, called me into his office for a private, "heart-to-heart" talk.

With tears in his eyes, he accused his rival of having helped to publish an "obscene" and "communistic" student newspaper—of which he happened to have a copy in his desk drawer. He urged me to join with him and the "leadership" and "get something done," instead of trying to "make trouble," which could only hurt me, he added.

I returned downstairs with some time to kill before the afternoon floor session. A lobbyist approached me and asked me where I stood on a certain bill. I told him.

Another delegate, who had heard me explain my position, stopped me as I headed into the chamber. "Why did you tell him where you stood?" he asked. "You could have kept him guessing and gotten a steak dinner out of him."

Inside the chamber, we were about to vote on the track and field hall of fame appropriation. "Boy I hate to vote for this damned thing," complained one delegate who had made a personal assurance months before that he now regretted.

As the bills came up, many delegates looked around the room for indications on how to vote. Some looked to a floor leader or committee chairman for a thumbs up or thumbs down. Others bent their ears to a colleague who might know something about the bill. On any given topic, probably about a third of the membership is familiar with the bill, another third knows the issue generally, and another third is playing follow the leader.

As we proceeded through the legislative calendar, the debates, bill explanations, and button-pushing roll-call votes continued. One delegate improved on Pythagoras when, in expressing his outrage at how his county was being mistreated, he lashed out at the "Charleston-Huntington-Morgantown-Wheeling triangle."

The Rules Committee Rules

The calendar was limited, however, because the session was nearing its end and the Rules Committee was in control. You see, during the last two weeks of a legislative session, when the volume of business is largest, the decision to defeat a bill is made, not by the 100 elected delegates in the House, but by the handful of delegates who make up the House Rules Committee. The Rules Committee may be the most effective device yet invented for wresting control of the Legislature from a majority of the elected representatives and putting it in the hands of a few key people. Here's how it works:

When a bill is reported to the floor

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from committee, it is put on the "calendar" so the House may vote on it. However, legislators tend to behave a bit like students with homework: they postpone major assignments. As a result, the "calendar" of bills gets unwieldy during the last two weeks of the session.

The Rules Committee was invented, in theory, as a "traffic cop" to go into action late in the session and "schedule" the consideration of bills, thus avoiding a logjam of last-minute legislation. The Committee is made up of the floor leaders, committee chairmen, and a few extras, usually people who worked their way into the inner circle by carrying water for the leadership or by voting right in the election for Speaker.

Under a resolution routinely approved early in the session by a coalition of leadership folks and naive freshmen, the Rules Committee is granted authority to put bills on a "special calendar" that takes precedence over the "regular calendar" of the House. In theory, the Committee only schedules bills to ensure an "orderly " flow of business. In practice, the Committee has assumed the power to judge bills on the basis of substance and policy.

In practice, also, if your bill is not chosen by the Committee for the "special calendar" chances are it will never make it to the floor for a vote. As soon as the special calendar has been completed each day, the House automatically adjourns. And just try getting the two-thirds vote necessary to suspend the rules and get your bill to the floor. (I tried once, and got six votes, plus a lot of scorn for my outlandish violation of "rules of the game.") So year after year, the session ends without the "regular calendar" ever being voted on, and the bills left there die a quiet, *de facto* death.

In effect, the Rules Committees have become mini-legislatures. It takes seven legislators to control the House Committee, and six to control the smaller Senate Committee. The intelligent lobbyist concentrates on them. After all, a cynic might ask, why buy a majority of the entire Legislature when you only need to pay for 13 members.

Evening Lessons

With all the scheduled special calendar items taken care of, the House adjourned for the day. I began gathering up a stack of homework and looked around the chamber as most of the delegates wandered out.

In front of me, a public relations aide had brought a draft of a weekly newspaper column to a delegate to be checked out before sending it to the hometown editor for publication. Another representative had a large stack of manila envelopes on her desk, and was dutifully signing the copies of bills she was mailing to grateful constituents. At the podium stood another lawmaker, beaming into the camera alongside schoolchildren from the district.

I left the scene and returned home briefly, driving back to the Capitol to leave a few bill requests with legislative services. Then I headed downtown, providing a lift to a colleague anxious to get to the Daniel Boone Hotel, the traditional grand central station for out-of-town delegates during the session.

This delegate, who had been strongly supported by the West Virginia Education Association, was offering his thoughts on politics. "I figured when I ran that it would be helpful to be expedient with at least one major interest group," he said. "So, hell, why not teachers?"

I dropped him near the Boone, where I also had to go to tape a radio show with a news reporter (a former legislator himself). The legislator-turned-broadcaster had a half-hour program, which he told me went to a string of radio stations in the rural, central part of West Virginia.

"I've got Delegate Sah-nus here with me," he told his audience as the tape recorder got rolling, "and I thought I'd

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ask him about two things I see here he's introduced. This abortion reform bill. And the bill to make Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday."

"Delegate Sah-nus," he said, "some people say abortion's murder. What do you say?"

I sensed I was in for an uncomfortable half hour, and I plunged into the subject expecting similar lines of questioning. I wasn't disappointed. When he got to the King bill, my interviewer prefaced his question by noting that he had seen a "report" that black people had been multiplying at a more rapid rate than white people.

After the radio show, I was leaving the hotel when an older member, who, it is fair to say, had had a few, approached me with a warm, kindly smile.

"I was like you boys once," he beamed. "Hell, I know you're right. You just go about it the wrong way. You'll learn when you get my age."

"If you agree with us, why don't you vote with us?" I asked him.

"How you vote don't matter, really, in the long run," he said. "You'll learn that, too, when you get my age."

I didn't stop to chat, but hurried across town to where the county teachers association was having its annual legislative dinner. We were scattered neatly around the tables... teacher, legislator, teacher, legislator, etc. After the dinner, each lawmaker was asked to rise and recite his or her views on the teachers' program. We did it in turn, over and over again, and some of us got it right.

As I left the dinner, I began to relax and mull over the day's events. I drove across the Kanawha City Bridge and headed home. Upon arriving, I walked upstairs and tossed my coat on the couch. The phone was ringing.

I spent the next half hour answering calls, highlighted by an irate father who insisted on having my views on whether sex education books were proper in displaying human genitals. Finally, I decided I needed to sleep and stopped picking up the receiver. I climbed into bed. The phone kept ringing until around midnight. ■

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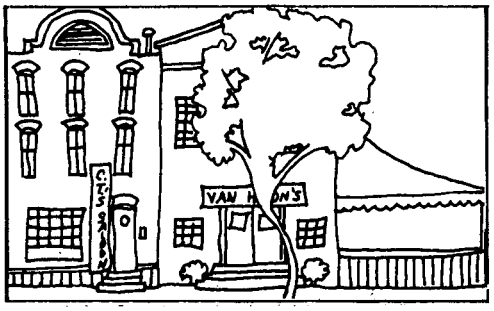
Roxie Munro



Where to Stay in Washington

The New Center of Washington—South of Massachusetts Ave., North of K St., Between 15th and 20th Streets.

These three hotels are always booked, each for a different reason: the Mayflower for its location and colorful history; the Jefferson as a quiet escape; the Madison for its glamorous reputation and fancy extras. One thing they share, however, is restaurants that are either unexciting or overpriced. But this is not a problem, as there are over a dozen that are cheaper and better nearby.

The Madison, 15th and M Sts. N.W., (202) 862-1600, (800) 424-8577. Skillful advertising has convinced a lot of out-of-towners that this is *the* luxury hotel in Washington. It's not—the Fairfax, Watergate, and Sheraton Carlton are stiff competition—but you can get your money's worth at the Madison by taking advantage of the extras: baths with heated towel racks, scales, refrigerators, telephones, and bidets; a box of chocolates and a pre-stocked liquor cabinet; the *Post* at your door in the morning, followed by a room-service breakfast served with sterling silver flatware and a fresh flower; and everywhere in the hotel, your room included, handsome objets d'art, antique furniture, and rugs brought from the Orient by the hotel's owner, Washington real estate magnate Marshall B. Coyne. And the *service*: a concierge to help in every way possible, from making plane, train, or theater reservations and picking up your tickets, to finding a shirt for your dinner jacket at 7:30 p.m. when you discover the one you just bought doesn't fit; then there are the four house detectives on duty 24 hours—ostensibly to protect the guests' valuables, but no doubt also to keep Mr. Coyne's artifacts from wandering away.

The clientele? "Eighty-five per cent of the people who arrive on the Concorde stay at the Madison," according to the management. Many of them come to meet with their counterparts in the American corporate and financial community—in one of the eight attractive meeting rooms. But don't worry, these get-togethers nowhere approach the size and brassiness of what could be called a convention. In addition all the function rooms are discreetly confined to one floor right above the lobby.

Singles, $73-$88; doubles, $88-$103; studios, $125; suites, $165 and up. Children under 15 free unless extra bed required.

Le Montpelier restaurant is elegant and gracious, with service to match, and the food can be quite good, but for a price (dinner entrees, $15-$22). You can do just as well and sometimes better for less by venturing a few blocks from the hotel (see below). **La Provence** is the hotel's equivalent of a coffee shop, but not in terms of price. Breakfast and lunch are fairly reasonable, but at $7-$15, dinner certainly is not.

The Madison's annex, the **Dolley Madison,** a quiet, 44-room newly renovated building a half block from the hotel, has the same service and extras as the main hotel, plus beautifully appointed, much more spacious rooms and suites (the latter all with four-posters), and a private, relaxed atmosphere. There's a small restaurant with a limited menu of dishes served in the Montpelier. The prices are slightly higher: singles, $90; doubles, $105; suites, $150 and $175.

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The Jefferson, 1200 16th St. N.W., (202) 347-4704, is the place to go to not be seen—which may be why the likes of Robert Redford, Leon Jaworski, and Theodore White have chosen it as their Washington address. The commercial area is two blocks away, there are no shops or newsstands in the hotel, the restaurant and lounge close at 10, and the doors lock at midnight (ring for entry). And with only one small meeting room, you can be sure there will be no conventioneers cluttering the lobby. The lobby and guest rooms are decorated in traditional style, with embellishments of antiques, canopied beds, and French-door windows scattered about. It was once one of Washington's great bargains, but so were Redskins' season tickets until the same man, Edward Bennett Williams, took over both organizations. Singles, $53-$60; doubles, $58-$65. Half the 110 rooms are suites with fully equipped kitchens (grocery store right behind the hotel): $80-$165. Children under 12 free. Self-parking a block away at own expense. The **Hunt Club** offers primarily beef and fish, with dinner entrees in the $8-$10 range.

The Mayflower, 1127 Connecticut Ave. N.W., (202) 347-3000, (800) 228-3000. This has to be Washington's most conveniently located hotel—surrounded by some of the best restaurants and shops in Washington, next door to a Metro station that will get you almost anywhere you want to go in 10 or 15 minutes, and with a line of cabs always at the door to take you everywhere else. The Mayflower is part of Washington's history. Starting with Calvin Coolidge's Inaugural Ball on the hotel's opening day in 1925, it's hosted inaugural activities for every president since, and Herbert Hoover, FDR, and Harry Truman all stayed here. J. Edgar Hoover's daily lunch spot in the Carvery is marked with a commemorative plaque.

Much of the grande dame atmosphere has disappeared in recent years, however, as the hotel has become one of the five main convention hotels in Washington. With 20 meeting rooms, including the elegant Grand Ballroom, it can handle groups of up to 1,200. Tradition still reigns in the guest rooms, but the lobby has suffered from the convention fever, with the addition of a lobby bar and of wood paneling that borders on tacky, not to mention turning one of the city's most elegant hotel restaurants, the Presidential, into a meeting room.

As of this writing, the hotel has 700 rooms, but on July 1 the number will drop to 437, when the back half of the guest floors is sealed off with what they say is a sound-proof wall, and a two-year renovation begins—late sleepers: *caveat emptor.* Singles, $45-$80; doubles, $59-$94; suites, $115-$150. Children under 18 free in the same room with parents. Group rates available on request. Two good two- and three-night package plans including meals and tours are available depending on space. Indoor parking, $4.50 a night.

The two restaurants, the **Carvery** and **Town and Country** (breakfast and lunch only, drinks and piano bar at night) are moderately expensive but not so special in cuisine or atmosphere that you wouldn't be doing yourself a favor to walk a few steps to one of the good and more interesting restaurants nearby.

Here are some alternatives to the hotel restaurants: **Le Lion d'Or,** 1150 Connecticut Ave., currently the top-rated French restaurant in Washington, is expensive, but worth it—elegant decor, excellent food and service. **Jean-Pierre,** 1835 K St., is less elegant, but also less expensive, and very good. And Jean Michel Farret is the most thoughtful host in Washington. Other good French restaurants: **Chez Camille,** 1737 DeSales St., **Le Provencal,** 1234 20th St., and the very reasonable **La Brochette,** 1825 M St. Our first recommendation for an Italian restaurant that goes beyond pizza and spaghetti is **Cantina d'Italia,** 1214-A 18th St., which is expensive, but very popular, or **Trattu,** 1823 Jefferson Pl., small, with very reasonably priced, tasty pasta dishes. At **Romeo and Juliet,** 2020 K St. and **Tiberio,** 1915 K St., you pay more, primarily for a more formal setting and cuisine.

If you're really more interested in hearty beef or broiled fish—American fare—try the **Prime Rib,** 2020 K St. or **The Palm,** 1225 19th St. Slightly less expensive are **Harvey's,** 1001 18th St. (for seafood especially), **Paul Young's,** 1120 Connecticut Ave. (spacious, excellent wine list), and **Duke Zeibert's,** 1722 L St. (to rub shoulders with lobbyists and Redskins as you put away the hearty American-Jewish food).

In the more moderate range, try the following, especially for lunch: **The Tabard Inn,** 1739 N St., serves light, freshly prepared dishes in a delightful Victorian townhouse. Right across the street, in an old coach house, is the **Iron Gate Inn,** 1734 N St., for good Middle Eastern food (better than the American dishes), which, in nice weather, you can enjoy in the lovely courtyard.

Further down the price range are places where you can still get very tasty meals, in a more informal, although often less peaceful, atmosphere. For a good Greek salad at $1.75, Moussaka at $3.25 and 75-cent drinks, it's the **Astor,** 1813 M St. **Le Souperb,** 1221 Connecticut Ave., is an attractive cafeteria specializing in hearty soups and stews. And of course there is one each of those good ol' fast-food favorites: **McDonald's,** 1909 K St., **Burger Chef,** 1216 18th St., **Burger King,** 1606 K St., and **Roy Rogers,** 2023 I St. But for genuinely simple, down-home cooking at incredibly low prices—a full meal for $2-$3—it's **Sholl's Cafeteria,** 1990 K St. Avoid the overcooked peas and watery beans, but you won't go wrong with liver and onions or turkey and dressing, spoon bread, and carrot cake for dessert.

—Carol Trueblood

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Memo of the Month

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF ALL OPERATING UNITS

SUBJECT: Gender-free Terminology

In my prior memorandum on this subject dated August 14, 1978, I recommended that the 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles be the reference source for checking sex-specific job titles. I used as an example the terms *stevedore* and *longshoreman*, and stated in a footnote that since *longshoreman* did not appear in the Dictionary, *stevedore* should be used in its stead.

It has come to my attention that, contrary to the contention of the authors of the Dictionary, *stevedore* and *longshoreman* are not the same job.1/ Therefore, please advise your employees that the term *longshoreman* may be used when necessary to interpret the provisions of a statute. Othewise, *longshore worker* is the preferred gender-free term.

It remains the policy of the Department of Commerce to replace gender-specific terms with non-sexist language whenever possible. Our intent is to use gender-free job titles where alternative titles exist, not to alter the substance of jobs. Although the 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles appears to have erred with respect to this particular job, it shall remain the general reference for checking job titles.

Elsa A. Porter
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

1/ A *stevedore* is an employer who is responsible for the loading and unloading of ships. A *longshoreman* is an employee (of the stevedore) who actually loads and unloads ships. The International Longshore Association informs us that its female workers are called "longshoremen."

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The Atomic Bond.

Using tiny explosive charges, Western Electric engineers are bonding metals with the elemental "glue" of the Universe.

Here's how it works. The atoms of all metals have a natural attraction for one another. If it weren't for the ever-present film of impurities coating the surface—the oxides, nitrides, and absorbed gasses—all metal atoms would bond to each other when brought together.

Exploding Things Together.

But the force of a high-intensity explosion on two adjacent metals will clean away the film of impurities. The explosion literally "blows" the impurities off the surfaces. So the atoms of the different metals can bond together.

The bond that results is stronger than both of the metals themselves.

As an industrial technique, explosive bonding has proved valuable in the manufacture of such heavy-weight products as bi-metallic gun barrels.

Pinpoint Explosions.

But how would explosives work in the delicate, intricate world of telephone circuitry?

Scientists at Western Electric's Engineering Research Center solved the problem by developing ways to miniaturize and control explosive bonding. Soon, they could splice the ends of two thin communications wires inside a miniature explosive-coated sleeve.

And they could repair tiny defective contacts on delicate circuit boards. These gold contacts (membrane-thin "fingers" 1/10 by 3/4 of an inch) are reclad by thin sheets of gold foil (.0005 inches thick), coated with explosives. The repairs are literally "blown" onto the contacts, without disturbing the delicate circuitry less than 1/10 of an inch away.

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"Where are the Children?": The New Data Game at HEW

by Geoffrey O'Gara

It is Dr. Edwin Martin's ninth year as Deputy Education Commissioner for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH), and, to the outsider, things seem to be going well. Since 1973 BEH has grown from a small research bureau into the third largest agency in HEW's Department of Education, and its mission—doling out federal grants to the states to pay for the education of handicapped children—seems to insure it of a long life and ample budget. It is hard, after all, to be against education for the handicapped. Parents are for it. Teachers are for it. Congressmen must be for it—they can't afford to be pictured as bullying blind kids or kids in wheelchairs. And Martin has made sure of these political truths—working hard to build a militant constituency among the people his agency serves, courting the press and toadying up to senators, lacing his congressional testimony with references to the research grants that have been steered to the states of the legislators who hold the gavel. He has done a thorough job, and he can be proud of the results: $800 million in annual aid sent to the states, a varied roster of research projects underway with BEH backing, and the general approval both of the lobbying groups that represent the handicapped, and the Congress—which has repeatedly given BEH more funding than the president's budget requested.

But there is a problem that has been nagging at Dr. Martin. He has returned to it, again and again, but it remains unsolved. You see, when the "Handicapped Bill of Rights" (as the National Education for All Handicapped Children Act was called) passed Congress in 1975, certain projections had been made. Specifically, BEH had put together a "panel of experts" to estimate how many handicapped kids there were in U.S. schools. Relying heavily on an HEW survey of clinics, schools, and state agencies—as well as studies commissioned by BEH from non-profit groups like the Council for Exceptional Children—the experts came back with a figure of 12 per cent. And BEH told Congress that, indeed, 12 per cent of America's school-age children probably needed "special education"—they had hearing and vision problems, speech impairments, emotional difficulties, mental retardation, orthopedic defects, or the generalized "learning disabilities." That 12 per cent figure had an intoxicating effect on congressmen, who actually wrote into the law books estimates of the handicapped population based on the BEH projection. The notion that there were millions of undiscovered, untreated handicapped kids out there in the schools became the rallying cry for an expanded BEH.

Dr. Martin's problem is, now that BEH and the states have been counting handicapped children for five years, that the number of handicapped kids is falling way below expectations. No state can find the projected 12 per

Geoffrey O'Gara is a Washington writer.

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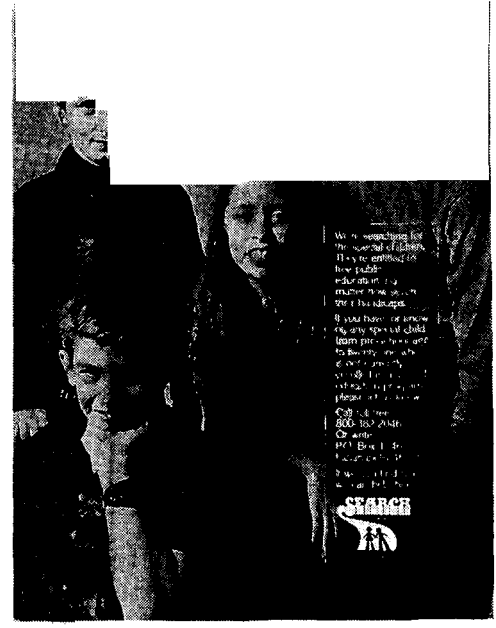
cent—indeed, the states are reporting that an average of only *seven* per cent of their students need special education. Some states are even reporting that nearly 95 per cent of their school-age population is perfectly normal, handicap-wise. Figures like these spell potential disaster to Dr. Martin in his efforts to solve the handicapped problem. For example, budget cutters in the OMB might seize on the handicapped shortfall as an excuse to keep BEH's funding below the authorized levels.

Almost a year ago, with figures still lagging despite BEH efforts, Dr. Martin decided something had to be done, so he called a retreat. Not a tactical withdrawal, but the more common form of retreat—a meeting. Martin and his staff repaired to a motel in Fredericksburg to ponder the crisis in statistics. There, an aide would later describe it, they "met for two days, away from the building and telephones, to discuss our feelings about what these findings mean and what should be done about them."

After long hours of discussion, they came up with their answer: it was time to crank up "Project Childfind." The reasoning behind the plan is familiar—the "childcount" means as much to BEH as rising crime rates meant to J. Edgar Hoover. But in this case, the logic is particularly incongruous, and the costs, in human terms, potentially great.

As Martin described the "childfind" campaign in a January memo, BEH would "refocus its operations so as to concentrate on the priority of making sure all handicapped children were appropriately served." The states weren't locating the promised 12 per cent, so BEH itself would have to drum them up. The first prong of the operation was a letter, sent to state education officials in January, expressing disappointment with the numbers of handicapped children they were producing. While the letter allowed skeptically that "it remains possible" that a state *might* find only eight or nine per cent of its school kids



handicapped, it admitted to nothing lower than that. And states that persistently report low "childcounts" have found themselves pressured by BEH in subtle ways. Long and difficult negotiations have dragged on as state officials attempting to get approval for federal funding are pushed to put more effort and money into "childfind." States with low childcounts get reminders from BEH that they are being watched, sometimes audited, for the flaws in their programs.

The second phase of Childfind was a barrage of memos to BEH's "grantees," the various researchers in universities around the country who receive special BEH funding to work on projects in "special ed." The memo encouraged them to do what they could to support BEH's "renewed emphasis" on turning up more children with learning impediments. The nominal work of the grantees—which might be anything from improvisational theater to building models of daycare centers for the handicapped—was to be supplemented by a more basic, emergency activity: uncovering the elusive handicapped kids concealed in their communities. The goal of 12 per cent handicapped could be reached if only everyone would pitch in.

As the final prong of BEH's attack, a vigorous campaign has been launched in the media asking "Where are the children?," and urging parents of the handicapped to assert their rights.

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Martin is adamant that 12 per cent is a proper target for his campaign. He admits the figure is "unscientific," but emphasizes the projections "have a long history, and it's been a very stable history." The figure, he said, "comes from a variety of sources." But it turns out that some of the studies on which BEH's original "experts" had relied were not models of accuracy. "We didn't examine the data very closely," one Hill staff member recalls of the central HEW statistics, "and we found out later we were multi-counting kids." In other words, if a child limped and spoke with a lisp, the HEW survey counted him twice. If he suffered from several handicaps, he had filled up an entire classroom on the charts.

Since the states first began reporting children with handicaps to BEH, no new study has been made to determine if the original 12 per cent figure was accurate—in fact, two studies funded by BEH concluded that the state counts were more accurate than any system BEH might devise to check on them. The 12 per cent figure, says New York's Special Education Director Lou Grumet, "is built on water."

But BEH is not about to give up its 12 per cent without a fight. The figure has, as Martin says, a long history. And Martin has dozens of charts, showing variances in the data among localities, to support his stand. Massachusetts, for example, is one of Martin's prize states. Massachusetts had no less than ten per cent of its school age population in special education programs from 1977 to 1978. If one state can come up with that many handicapped kids, Martin asks, why can't others?

Checking with Massachusetts officials and other special ed specialists, however, turns up a few of the secrets of that state's success in the "childfind" sweepstakes. Massachusetts' standards for identifying the handicapped, it seems, are "functional"—that is, if a student fails in school, he qualifies for special education. He may have failed because he was lazy, or because he was out stealing hubcaps, but he makes it into the "handicapped" group anyway. It also turns out that at least 10,000 of the Massachusetts kids listed as "school-aged handicapped" in BEH's tables aren't school-aged at all—they are aged three to five or 18 to 21. Excluding these kids would drop the total at least one per cent and drop Massachusetts out of the select group of states that can claim double-digit handicapped.

So there may be a quite simple reason why BEH has had such a hard time finding kids who are supposed to be floundering unrecognized in the schools. They aren't there. They never were there. Even the Council on Exceptional Children, whose own studies contributed to the original 12 per cent projection, is ready to abandon it. "Let's live with the numbers we've got," says Joe Ballard of CEC's legislative office. "We don't like this going out there and pounding the table and saying let's get 12 per cent, because then, God knows, we start counting the barn doors."

The "barn door" problem is what makes the "childfind" effort so perverse. It seems BEH is looking for its big childcount increases in four "grey" categories: "learning disabilities," speech and hearing problems, emotional disturbances, and mental retardation. As BEH Commissioner Martin admits, such classifications often require "judgment" calls, and standards vary. One man's retarded student might merely be another's candidate for remedial reading. So, as BEH pushes for ever higher childcounts, and pressures states into ever more inclusive "special education" programs, it runs a risk greater than that of wasting federal dollars—it risks slapping labels on children that can never be shaken off.

In particular, some states in the South appear to throw large numbers of minority children into the "mentally retarded" category. In Alabama, and in North and South Carolina, BEH records for the 1977-78 school year show thousands more students classified as mentally retarded than even BEH's generous predictions

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would lead one to expect. And in Mississippi, according to the Children's Defense Fund, black children are classified as mentally retarded at three times the rate of white children. Few educators will discuss the problem on the record, but many will privately acknowledge that, since minorities generally perform poorly on such "intelligence" measures as standard IQ tests, there is a risk—particularly in southern border states and large urban centers—that a school system might "dump" minority students into the ambiguous categories. In the Southwest, as well, a Spanish-speaking youth could easily be labeled "learning disabled" when all he needs is a few courses in English.

Martin says that BEH warns the states against "overclassification." But the Bureau's actions belie these warnings. Texas, for example, classified almost four per cent of its schoolchildren as "learning disabled" in 1977-78. That's about 27,000 more kids than BEH's own projections of three per cent would predict. But instead of raising questions about all those "LD" kids, BEH is raising a ruckus because Texas registered a slight drop of 9,000 students in its overall handicapped total.

BEH does face some obstacles in its battle with the states. Frequently, state schools can get more federal aid if they connect a student's problems in school to economic deprivation, rather than physical or mental handicap. As one education lobbyist described the process: "With Title One [of the Elementary and Secondary School Act] money, I might call a kid language disordered. If I want BEH money, I might call the child learning disabled. . . . There are policies, state and local, which make an absolute separation. You can't serve them under both." In the childcount bidding, BEH sometimes finds itself competing with other federal programs that provide more money, with fewer strings and less paperwork involved.

Even those states that can resist BEH's financial power must contend with Martin's absolute mastery of the rhetoric of handicapped rights. I caught a glimpse of what they're up against myself when I mentioned to Martin that one California special ed teacher had told me the "childcount" drive was throwing his state's progressive four-year "Master Plan" out of kilter. Martin immediately responded, "I'm astonished that anyone in a responsible position would say that. It has not been [California's] position to soft-pedal kids' rights." As I said, you don't want to be on the wrong side of this issue.

A Man With A Goal

If Dr. Martin's agency could content itself with pursuing the magical 12 per cent figure by the time-honored, and relatively inexpensive, techniques of statistical warfare—"multi-counting," lax bookkeeping, and simple fraud—the results wouldn't be so bad. Unfortunately, BEH seeks to have its preferred statistics actually reflected in reality, and by attempting to bend the real world to fit its projections, BEH raises the possibility of unnecessarily burdening children with exactly what handicapped activists seek to eliminate—a "stigmatizing" label. The agency will most certainly expend a great deal of time and money on posters and research grants to produce higher numbers, money that might be better spent improving the *quality* of "special education" for those with an unambiguous need for it.

Despite the competition of other grants peddlers, and the outright resistance of many states, "Project Childfind" may yet succeed. BEH is set on its course; it has the power of the purse, and the federal soapbox. Who knows—with advanced techniques, one day the majority of our children may be discovered to have one "learning disability" or another. Dr. Martin is a skilled and determined man—determined to scour America for any child suffering from a physical or mental handicap. The more of them he finds, the happier he will be. ■

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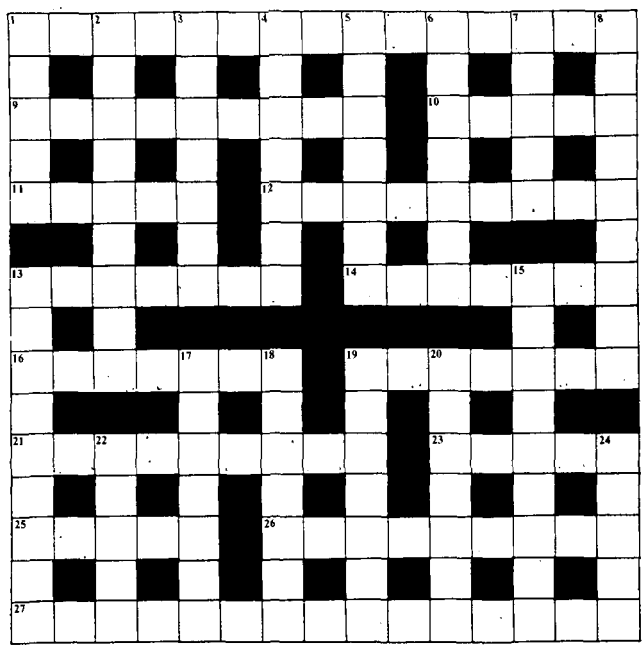
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. Radio and TV cite Eric Mondale awkwardly. (10,5)
9. Carter takes 499 in gift. (9)
10. Some seats may be capital. (5)
11. Flower found in Camelot usually. (5)
12. Discards wild tutor show. (6,3)
13. Put Colorado in for example, why it is a modern study. (7)
14. Earned red time mixture. (7)
16. Cuts short short time in bits. (7)
19. Crazy dadless seats. (7)
21. Bothered tender Tom badly. (9)
23. If big, it is a city? (5)
25. Work back to hold up Capone. (5)
26. Tax men fix up S.S. Ross Sea. (9)
27. Post times re: pawnlady spies displayed. (5,10)

DOWN

1. In fact put out sex pelican-style. (5)
2. Choices from the Spanish notices translated. (9)
3. Rosetti managed attempts. (7)
4. Try love strangely in public. (7)
5. Perhaps remit in the meantime. (7)
6. A cat Farrow wore casually. (7)
7. Entertainment spot in first stages of discovery. (5)
8. Positions that almost turn out destitute. (9)
13. In trouble? Melt a debt, stir! (9)
15. Instrument he let open sloppily. (9)
17. Plainly makes 150 and 50 plus a year. (7)
18. Locate a rumpled tea suit. (7)
19. Cruel ones were somewhat staid in the ship. (7)
20. Israeli low point comes out as a deed. (4,3)
22. Teacher begins rabbit examination. (5)
24. Confusion sates bridge players? (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.

Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 9.

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Who's Who in the Administration

There are three new speechwriters on the Carter staff: **Gordon Stewart,** a screenwriter and director, who has written speeches in several New York Democratic campaigns, **Carol Coleman,** an advertising copywriter for Gerald Rafshoon's ad agency, and the **Reverend R.L. Maddox,** a Baptist clergyman from Calhoun, Georgia. Maddox, at least, promises to bring excitement to presidential prose. We have obtained this sensual sample from his earlier works:

"When I was a boy in Plains, Georgia, (you've all heard of Plains, Georgia) I can remember standing by the railroad track as steam engines roared and rattled through our town. Those big silver drive wheels turned at a dizzying clip being pushed and pumped by huge stroking connecting rods. Back and forth, back and forth those shafts surged to move the engine and the laden cars forward. Both directions of the rods essential if the train was to make any progress at all.

"Baptists as people of the Bible have been called to always be on a journey inward and a journey outward, both directions essential if we are to make any progress at all. Just as the train would have chugged to a halt without the push and pull of the rods, so will we as Baptists stall and stop if we do not understand and practice the necessity of an ongoing journey inward and a journey outward, individually and as a denomination.

"We are talking these days about Bold Mission. I have not heard a grander idea nor encountered a more noble concept under which a great religious body like ours can function. This Bold Mission Thrust for our Lord and for his world must incorporate both directions—inwardness and outwardness."

In

DEFENSE

Army Chief of Staff—**Edward C. Meyer,** a three-star general, has been Army Deputy Chief of Staff for operations and plans.

Marine Corps Commandant—**General Robert H. Barrow** is a former drill instructor and a four-star general.

ENERGY

Undersecretary of Energy—**John Deutch** has been Acting Assistant Secretary for Energy and Technology. He replaces Dale Myers, who resigned.

HEW

Deputy Inspector General—**Richard B. Lowe III** was chief of the trials division of the New York County District Attorney's Office.

INTERIOR

Executive Assistant to Secretary of Interior—**Steven F. Freundenthal** was a deputy undersecretary of Interior.

JUSTICE

Assistant Director, FBI—**Nick F. Stames** was the chief of the Washington field office.

Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Division—**Richard J. Fauretto** has worked in the division since graduation from law school in 1966.

LABOR

Commissioner of Labor Statistics—**Janet L. Norwood** has been acting Commissioner since April, 1978.

STATE

Ambassador to Egypt—**Alfred L. Atherton** has been an ambassador-at-large.

Ambassador to Iran—**Walter Cutler** has been ambassador to Zaire.

Ambassador to Nicaragua—**Lawrence A. Pezzullo,** a career foreign service officer, has been ambassador to Uraguay.

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AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Federal Communications Commission
Director of the Broadcast Bureau—**Philip Verveer** has been chief of the Cable Bureau.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Director—**John W. Macy, Jr.,** LBJ's Civil Service chairman, has been a management consultant in Iran for the past four years.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Director of Office of Congressional and Public Affairs—**Kenneth S. Levine** has been deputy assistant secretary of HEW for legislation since the start of the Carter administration.

Federal Labor Relations Authority
General Counsel—**H. Stephen Gordon** is the chief administrative law judge of the Department of Labor.

Federal Reserve Board
Vice Chairman—**Frederick H. Schultz** is chairman of the board of Barnett Investment Services and a former Florida legislator.

Member—**Emmitt Rice** is senior vice-president of the National Bank of Washington.

National Science Board
Member—**Lewis M. Branscomb** is vice president and chief scientist for IBM. He is a former director of the National Bureau of Statistics.

Out

White House
Assistant Director, Domestic Policy Staff—**Mary Schuman**, who has handled transportation issues, is leaving for personal reasons.

Deputy Press Secretary—**Walter W. Wurfel** will become Washington Director of Information for the Gannett Company newspaper group.

Staff Member, National Security Council—**Jessica Tuchman Matthews** is leaving after two years for personal reasons.

Staff member, National Security Council—**Rick Underfurth** has resigned to become deputy staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

HEW
Commissioner of the FDA—**Donald Kennedy** has resigned to return to Stanford University as provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Interior
Director, Bureau of Mines—**Roger A. Markel** has resigned to become president of the Valley Camp Coal Company.

Executive Assistant to the Secretary—**Charles M. Parrish** is joining President Carter's reelection campaign as field director for the Carter-Mondale committee. Parrish was Texas coordinator for Carter in 1976.

Justice
FBI Associate Director—**James B. Adams** has resigned to become executive director of the criminal justice division in the office of Texas Governor William Clements.

State
Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs—**Leslie H. Gelb** is leaving to become a consultant to the German Marshall Fund. He will be replaced by Reginald Bartholomew, a Soviet expert on the National Security Council.

Ambassador to Nicaragua—**Mauricio Solaun** has resigned for personal reasons.

Ambassador to Mauritius—**Robert Keeley** will leave that post to become deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of African Affairs.

Agencies and Commissions

Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Counselor—**Adam Yarmolinsky** has resigned to become counsel to the law firm of Kominers, Fort, Schlefer & Boyer.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission
Chairman—**Gary L. Seevers** has resigned to go into private industry.

Environmental Protection Agency
Assistant administrator for Water and Hazardous Materials—**Thomas Jorling** is leaving to return to Williams College as a professor.

Law Enforcement Assistant Administration
Administrator for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention—**John M. Rector** will work on a special assignment in the Office of Improvements in the Administration of Justice.

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What Carter Didn't Know About Mexico and Why He Didn't Know It

by Joseph Burkholder Smith

In the annals of foreign policy-making, Jimmy Carter's recent excursion to Mexico does not seem destined to rank as one of the great triumphs of our time. After it was over, the White House and State Department tried to sell the idea that it had been full of "mutual understanding" that would lead to friendlier relations between Mexico and the United States, but the press wasn't buying it. Reporters instead wrote about how Mexican President Lopez Portillo had lectured Carter on the state of Mexican-American relations, and how Carter, in toasting his hosts, had put his foot squarely in his mouth.

In trying to figure out why Carter didn't exactly win over the Mexicans, I was prompted to look back on my own experience in Mexico. For four years, earlier in this decade, I worked in the American embassy in Mexico City, and I daresay that what goes on there has a lot to do with why Carter's trip was less than a stirring success. Unless there has been a radical change in their *modus operandi* (and the Carter trip seems convincing evidence that there hasn't), the American embassy staff isn't very much concerned with apprising itself of the nuances of Mexican political reality, or improving Mexican-American relations. Indeed, what struck me most during my stay was how little the embassy staff knew or cared about Mexican politics. Looking back, I don't think it's too much to say that our understanding of Mexico ranks right up there with our recent understanding of Iran.

Joseph Burkholder Smith is a Florida writer.

People Processing

The embassy in Mexico is one of our larger ones, with over 400 local employees, and an American staff of more than half that number. It is a pleasant place to work. The pressure-cooker atmosphere that keeps Foggy Bottom steaming is refreshingly absent. The embassy officially opens at 9:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. By five minutes after six, all of the 400-plus Mexican employees have streamed down the canopied steps and crowded through the gate of the high steel fence that surrounds the embassy. Most of the American staff has jostled with them through the exit at the same time. The few remaining Americans are usually out of the building by 6:15. At 6:30, the place is deserted except for the Marine guard who has surrendered his desk at the head of the entrance steps and taken up his evening position in the receptionist's booth, where he can handle night phone calls.

Most of the work done during the day involves processing Mexican visa applicants and assisting American tourists and residents with their problems. If you pass by the embassy in Mexico City any day of the week from Monday through Friday at 8:00

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a.m., the crowd of Mexicans on the sidewalk outside will startle you. If you've been to Asia, Africa, or the Middle East, you may think it's an anti-American demonstration in the offing. That's not it, at least not yet. These people are seeking a ticket of admission to the United States—a temporary border crossing permit, a student visa, visitor's visa, immigrant status, anything they can get.

Processing these people is time-consuming because the embassy staff is under pressure from back home to screen every applicant carefully. You've heard of the illegal border crossings, but perhaps the greatest number of Mexicans residing illegally in the United States first entered with a proper document and then ignored the conditions governing length of stay.

When not trying to cope with this army of migratory Mexicans, the embassy staff is occupied answering questions from tourists who have had their wallets stolen, lost their tourist cards or passports, are seeking stray sons and daughters last known to have gone on a mushroom trip in Oaxaca, or are looking for assistance in trying to spring even more errant ones from jail in Guerrero. Complications in these latter cases sometimes arise because the young people have had marijuana planted on them in Acapulco by "friendly" local youths, who may have been motivated to frame the Americans by rewards financed by zealous U.S. narcotics agents trying to better their bust records and get promoted.

The embassy staff also spends hours listening to pleas for help from American retirees trying to fathom the intricacies of the rules the Mexican Secretary of Interior has developed to keep close tabs on foreigners living permanently in Mexico. Property ownership is a particularly sticky subject. Still mindful of the land grab that lost their country Texas and the rest of what is now the southwestern part of the United States, the Mexicans, when writing their constitution in 1917, prohibited foreign ownership of land within 100 miles of the borders of the country. This can be legally circumvented by trust arrangements under which Mexican banks hold ultimate title. But a lot of people try extra-legal tricks, such as using Mexican citizens as fronts for purchases. These arrangements are not dealt with kindly when discovered by the Mexican government, and the embassy can do nothing to intervene. That, of course, does not keep the aggrieved American from demanding action anyway—often with angry accusations that "I pay your salaries."

Once you get past the people processing visas and fielding complaints, you find another group of employees, higher-ranking than the visa-processors, who are charged with reporting accurately the political realities of Mexico, with handling whatever issues crop up between the two countries, and, in general, with being well-informed about the country in which they are living. To state it bluntly, these employees are simply not doing the job they are supposed to be doing, and part of the reason is the State Department's traditional attitude toward Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

'Nothing Happens There'

Mexico belongs to a class of countries that leaders of the American foreign policy establishment long considered an unsubject. To a man, the founding fathers of the modern Foreign Service, the men who built the State Department after the death of Franklin Roosevelt, considered Mexico and the rest of Latin America simply not worth their attention. Loy Henderson, Charles Bohlen, Hugh Gibson, George Kennan, and their peers were concerned only with what went on in the main European capitals, and in Moscow. Latin America just wasn't sexy enough to merit much attention.

"Nothing happens there," one of their number once told me. When he did a tour of duty as Chief of State Department Personnel, he said, he sent all the screw-ups there. "That's where I shipped off the guys who were about to

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become the leading candidates for selection out."

That attitude is nowhere better expressed than in George Kennan's *Memoirs*. In February and March 1950, as he was about to turn over the Department's planning staff to his successor and leave the government, he decided to take a trip, a sort of swan song, to attend the annual conference of our ambassadors to Latin America. The conference was being held in Rio de Janeiro, but Kennan used the opportunity to swing through seven other cities. He started in Mexico City, and then flew to Caracas and Rio. After the Rio conference, he visited Sao Paulo, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires, returning to the United States via Lima and Panama City. "I had never been there," he writes, "and I wanted to see something of it before I left government." He wasn't impressed with what he saw.

The report he wrote after the trip was quickly classified when the assistant secretary of State for Latin America persuaded the secretary of State to lock up all the copies. It was too brutally negative ever to be released; the damage it could have done to relations with Latin America would have been irreparable. Kennan, however, takes great pleasure in quoting himself:

"There were, I wrote, certain appreciations concerning the Latin American area as a whole which strike the casual visitor with a heavy melancholy force. . . . It seems to me unlikely that there could be any other region of the earth in which natural and human behavior could have combined to produce a more unhappy and hopeless background for the conduct of human life than in Latin America."

To Kennan, the geography of the place is just all wrong; cities are not in the right locations, the climate's abominable, and a lot of land is infertile. "North America is broad and ample in those temperate regions which are most suitable to human life. . . . South America, on the other hand, is wide and vast in those portions of it which are close to the equator and least suited to human habitation, and it is the temperate zone into which the continent narrows at its southern extremity, pinching off with a fateful abruptness the possibilities for a vigorous and hopeful development of human society."

Having dismissed the Latin American landscape and climate, he moves on to its people, and as a group he finds them even more miserable than the lands they inhabit. "[I]n the realm of individual personality, subconscious recognition of the failure of group effort finds its expression in an exaggerated self-centeredness and egotism—in a pathetic urge to create the illusion of separate courage, supreme cleverness, and a limitless virility where the more constructive virtues are so conspicuously lacking."

Though Kennan is the only one I know of who put this attitude in writing (some things are better not written, as every diplomat knows), his feelings about North America's superiority over Latin America have been shared by key policy makers for years.

The Strawberry Negotiations

My stint in Mexico City showed me how this attitude was translated into policy by the Foreign Service. It wasn't just a matter of sending the least promising diplomats to serve in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. It was also what those diplomats did once they got there. Because Mexico was so low on the State Department's totem pole, there was never any compelling interest on the part of the embassy's political staff to negotiate, nation to nation, on issues the Mexicans felt strongly about. Mostly, these were considered regional issues, important to a few states, but nothing the U.S. should be overly concerned with. For a long time, for example, the problem of alien immigrant and Mexican migrant workers was thought by our embassy staff to be a problem for Texas, California, and a few other southwestern states, too parochial to merit much attention.

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The same was true of the Hoover Dam. For years, the Mexicans have complained vociferously that since the construction of the dam in 1936, the water Mexico gets from the Colorado River has a high salt content that makes it unfit for irrigation. To Mexicans, this means that we are stealing all the good water before it reaches their country. But for 43 years, this subject has been of so little interest that the political officers assigned to it have been content to pass each other memos every now and then, with no real progress made in meeting the Mexicans' complaints.

Another area where Mexican complaints received almost no satisfaction at the embassy were the restrictions imposed by various states on the importation of Mexican tomatoes and strawberries. What made this even more galling to Mexico was that years ago the State Department encouraged Mexican farmers to increase their tomato and strawberry production, promising that they could find a ready-made market in the United States. Now that production has increased, Mexican farmers find their supposed markets blocked by import restrictions. But the strawberry problem was never taken seriously by our staff. Negotiations over strawberries were a dull chore for our diplomats when I was in Mexico, often joked about in the embassy cafeteria at coffeebreak time. No one's career would stand or fall on the outcome of these negotiations; our people knew that and so, I suspect, did the Mexicans. Indeed, more than once I remember hearing the chief political officer come out of a staff meeting with the ambassador and say to anyone within earshot: "Well, we talked about strawberries again." That line always got a laugh.

In addition to responding to a country's legitimate gripes, an embassy's political staff is supposed to be informed about the nuances of its politics and aware of any changes brewing in the political winds. Here too, the staff in Mexico City was appallingly deficient. Part of the reason, I think, has to do with America's generally patronizing attitude towards Mexico. We take Mexicans for granted. We assume they'll never give us any trouble. They have no military establishment worthy of the name; in fact, the Mexican government spends more money on education than on arms. Their troubled economy is dominated by American companies, and sells over 60 per cent of its exports to us. They can't get along without us. So there has never been any incentive to make much effort to look for hints of political change.

But another reason, just as important, is that our staff in Mexico City was often unwilling to do the kind of legwork necessary in political reporting, and was more concerned instead with maintaining turf and prerogatives. The top political officers seemed to consider the bulk of their job to keep as full a social calendar as possible. There wasn't a party or reception in town that they would miss, and cables would be sent to Washington on the small talk that ensued. When I was there, the second-ranking political officer spent an enormous amount of time planning a little convention in the Yucatan for American and Mexican diplomats for a few days of off-the-record discussions. This sounded quite worthwhile until he told me he didn't really plan to spend much time talking to Mexicans, he just wanted a free vacation for himself and his wife.

What the staff should have been doing was cultivating friendships with a broad spectrum of Mexican businessmen, ambitious young politicians, and middle-level bureaucrats, who could explain to them the subtleties of Mexican politics. It is instructive to note, in this regard, that when Lopez Portillo was named president, there wasn't a soul in the American embassy who knew much about him or realized that he was in line to become president, although this was generally common knowledge among the Mexicans.

The embassy hierarchy is another hindrance to accurate political intelligence. When I was there, a good deal of energy was spent squabbling over which diplomat would be allowed to

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speak to which Mexican. The higher the rank of our diplomat, the less likely he would deign to meet and talk with anyone but a Mexican Cabinet secretary. No one wanted to talk to people "below rank"; there was no status in that. At the lower level, the one staffer assigned to collect biographical data on various Mexican politicians was never allowed to go out and meet these people, to find out what they thought, because that would be considered pulling rank.

With the embassy staff in such disarray, one might think that the CIA would take up the slack. The CIA, after all, has an important job that has nothing to do with covert operations—providing an alternate source of information for the American government, getting access to the kind of people ambassadors and foreign service officers don't ordinarily see. But even the CIA never delved deeply into Mexican affairs.

Two former CIA officers with widely divergent viewpoints make this last point implicitly in their writings. One of them is Philip Agee, who hated the CIA and was encouraged by the Cubans to expose as many CIA officers and operations as he could remember; the other is David Phillips, who was encouraged by the agency to write an official account of the CIA's role in Latin America, one that the CIA could live with comfortably.

"The CIA station in Mexico City is one of the most important in the world," writes Phillips in his book, *The Night Watch*. "This status does not derive from any special interest in Mexico and the Mexicans as intelligence targets as Mexico doesn't have much in the way of secrets.... The reason for a large CIA contingent in Mexico City is to conduct what are known as 'third country operations.' That is, using Mexico for access to the nationals of other countries."

According to Phillips, Mexico City is the main outpost of Soviet intelligence in Latin America, and, "since 1959, for Cuban skullduggery in the Western Hemisphere." Periodically the CIA discovers people (including Lee Harvey Oswald) making contact with Soviet and Cuban embassies there—"coming up on the CIA's radar screens," to use Phillips' phrase.

Agee explains how the "radar screen" manages to come up with so much. He describes the CIA's liaison with Mexican intelligence that enables the agency to cover the telephones of the Soviet and Cuban embassies and provides other kinds of surveillance assistance. Agee also mentions a few operations the CIA ran against Mexican leftists while he was stationed there in 1968 undercover as assistant embassy attache for the Olympic Games.

But Agee's attempt to show the CIA trying to gain political intelligence on Mexican affairs—as opposed to the comings and goings of Cubans and Russians—is thin indeed for anyone familiar with CIA operations. Agee tries, for example, to make the social contacts of a CIA officer in Mexico look sinister and significant but it doesn't ring true. In fact, in Mexico, as in Iran, the CIA won't jeopardize its special relationship with Mexican intelligence by spying on Mexicans. This is the message one gets from Agee's expose as clearly as from Phillips' puffery.

Concerned officials of the Mexican secretary of Interior's office were both angered and puzzled by Agee's book. They were angered that Agee blew the whistle about the CIA liaison relationship, but puzzled that the United States spent so little effort spying on its closest neighbor. In a perverse sort of way, our lack of spying showed a lack of concern. To the Mexicans it was one more confirmation that we didn't take them seriously.

Rejecting The Snobbery

Now that the Mexicans have discovered oil and gas reserves that are almost certainly greater than Saudi Arabia's, we are finally paying them some attention. But for Mexico it may be a case of too little too late. Even if our staff there were to suddenly start asking the right questions and seeking

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out the right people, it is unlikely that their Mexican contacts would tell them much about the facts of Mexican political life; they have felt slighted by us too long. To begin reversing that process, our American diplomats—and the rest of us—have to stop looking down our noses at Mexico, and begin rejecting the snobbery embodied in Kennan's 1950 report. We need to understand not only the political, but the cultural aspects of Mexican life. Once we start listening to the voices coming up from south of the border, as it appears we have begun to do, we ought to try to understand and appreciate our Mexican neighbors—and maybe learn something from them.

One example: Mexicans have a highly developed sense of historical self-consciousness, higher than any other country in Latin America. It may be what has made their country the most politically stable in the entire region for the past 40 years, and accounted for their economic growth, which, although struggling, is still the best in the area.

This historical self-consciousness is officially encouraged in Mexico, and it is a source of pride for Mexicans. All the country's museums and archeological sites charge only a nominal fee or are entirely free to the public on Sundays, the day the Mexican worker has off. These places are full of proud nationalist propaganda. At the Chapultepec Castle, the propaganda found on plaques on the wall is especially strong stuff. But after all, this is a national monument that has seen some especially strong history. Mexican teenage cadets threw themselves over its walls to their deaths rather than surrender to General Scott's army. The European pretender whom Napoleon III tried to make their emperor lived there before nationalist troops captured and shot him. More importantly, Moctezuma, the ancient ruler of great historical importance to Mexicans, had a palace on these grounds. (That's right, it's Moctezuma. The AAA travel guides spell it right, even if the State Department doesn't.) There the Spanish found him, sipping chocolate spiced with vanilla brewed to the consistency of honey, and taking two baths a day.

Their great past is taught to all Mexicans, and it is the foundation of their self-consciousness. They know they are not only the descendents of the Aztecs, but of civilizations that form a major segment of the world's culture—the Olmecs, the Maya, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Tarascans, Toltecs, and Totonacs. Their ancestors invented the zero a thousand years before the Arabs, who finally got the concept across to Europeans; and the art of daily bathing is an accomplishment that was not attained by Western civilization until 300 years after the astonished Spaniard stared at Moctezuma.

This sense of past is one thing that separates Mexico from a number of its Latin American neighbors. In Argentina, for example, the entire society seems to have broken down into racial, ethnic, or religious groups. If you ask someone in Buenos Aires who is an Argentine, he will likely point to someone else. That doesn't happen in Mexico.

Their sense of the past gives the Mexicans an important sense of self-worth and also has much to do with their relationship with the United States, which figures so prominently (and tragically, in their view) in their history. Kinder second thoughts about what President Lopez Portillo told President Carter and what all Mexicans try to tell Americans would profit us all. Even George Kennan had second thoughts about his 1950 judgment of Latin Americans. Years later, as he was penning *Memoirs*, he wrote, as an afterthought to his report, "The human existence is everywhere tragic, that of Latin America is tragic only in its own manner. . . . The South American continent may prove some day to be the last repository and custodian of humane Christian values that men in the European motherlands and in North America—overfed, overorganized, and blinded by fear and ambition—have thrown away." ■

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Sunset Laws: Why They Aren't Working

by Barry Mitzman

Nearly everyone agrees that sunset laws are the best way yet devised for curbing the growth of bureaucracy. The idea is simple and appealing. It's that government agencies, programs, and regulations should be reviewed periodically to determine whether they still (or ever did) serve some useful purpose. A sunset law simply sets deadlines for agencies or programs to go out of business—unless legislators decide they're needed and vote to reestablish them.

In just the past three years, the sunset idea has come from nowhere to win almost universal assent. It was part of both the Democratic and Republican party platforms in 1976. It was endorsed by Jimmy Carter in his campaign and his first "fireside chat." It has been the subject of approving editorials in hundreds of newspapers, including *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Star*. It has found active support among lobbyists for organizations as diverse as the League of Women Voters and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

But most of all, sunset is the brainchild of Common Cause, which claims to have developed the concept. The so-called "citizen's lobby" was largely responsible for passage of the first sunset law, in Colorado in 1976. Since then Common Cause has lobbied successfully for sunset laws in 30 states. The idea has taken hold in state legislatures around the country more quickly than any other legislative innovation in recent memory.

It has taken root even in the halls of Congress. Last year the Senate passed a sunset bill, introduced by Senator Edmund Muskie, which would abolish virtually every federal program every ten years unless Congress specifically provided reauthorization. The bill died in the House, but it's back this session, along with at least five other sunset proposals, all rather similar, and the chance for passage of some kind of sunset law seems bright. Muskie has better than two thirds of the Senate behind his bill, and a nearly identical measure has more than 160 co-sponsors in the House. Meanwhile, the mechanism turns up elsewhere: Jimmy Carter's regulatory reform plan includes a sunset clause requiring agencies to regularly review their regulations.

The reason a federal sunset law is almost certain to pass is that it uniquely appeals to the forces of both

Barry Mitzman is an Oregon writer. This article was financed by a grant from the Sabre Foundation.

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"good government" and "less government." Liberals regard sunset as a tool for reforming inefficient programs; conservatives, as a tool for abolishing them. Muskie says sunset is "imaginative" and "revolutionary" in that it will "lend a new element of discipline and cohesiveness to the way the federal government handles the American taxpayer's money." Senator William V. Roth, a conservative Republican from Delaware, believes sunset is "the most important and significant reform of this decade" because it will "assure that effective programs continue and that ineffective programs be terminated."

But before Congress rushes to enact its own sunset law, it ought to take a look at what's happened in some of the states that already have sunset provisions. These states offer a startlingly different picture from the one Muskie and Roth have been painting. In the half-dozen states in which agencies were scheduled to die by the end of last year, the sunset mechanism has not been a potent agent for change at all. Quite the opposite, it turns out: in the places they have been tried, sunset laws have been generally ineffective and a waste of time and money, doing almost nothing to abolish agencies, and not much more to reform them.

The Sunset Pioneer

Colorado, the sunset pioneer, is a good example. Its 1976 law scheduled 39 regulatory agencies and boards to go out of business—13 in 1977, the rest this year and in 1981. The law requires the legislature to hold public hearings on the agencies and to conduct "performance audits."

The first round of agency reviews can best be described as chaotic. Audits were completed late, and legislators largely ignored them. Hearings were sparsely attended by the public, but the agencies' staffs and supporters were out in force.

As in most states, Colorado's regulatory boards are dominated by the industries the boards are supposed to regulate. So naturally the regulated industries were strongly opposed to abolishing their boards, and turned out in large numbers to campaign against deregulation. Intense lobbying by local undertakers, for example, resulted in passage of a last-minute bill saving their licensing board from extinction.

Ultimately, the legislature did abolish three small boards: the Athletic Commission, the Board of Professional Sanitarians, and the Board of Shorthand Reporters. Shorthand reporters were not deregulated, however; licensing authority merely was transferred to another agency. Two boards, licensing barbers and cosmetologists, were consolidated. But another two—one regulating collection agencies, the other overseeing the safety of ski lifts—were reestablished and given expanded authority.

In reviewing the few sizable and important boards up for sunset, Colorado's part-time legislature found itself in over its head. It postponed review of the insurance and public utility commissions for a year—leaving them to an uncertain, provisional existence under continuing resolutions. Then, not only were the boards reestablished, with only minor changes, but *another* agency was created to oversee operations of the insurance commission.

Clearly, Colorado's sunset law has done little to curtail government regulation. And it certainly hasn't reduced state spending. The combined annual budget of the three agencies abolished was $6,810. Sunset audits and hearings cost the state an estimated $212,300.

Colorado's poor showing might be blamed on start-up problems. After all, no other state had ever tried sunset before. But this explanation will not serve for Alabama, the second state to put sunset into effect. There, things went even worse.

Like the laws in six other states, Alabama's applies to every state agency. It specifies that on the tenth day of each regular session, both houses of the legislature must begin considering and voting on agencies

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scheduled to die. Neither house may take up other business until both have completed action on sunset. Last year nearly 300 agencies were up for review.

Because there were so many, each agency was allotted just 15 minutes of committee hearings. When the time came to vote, the House of Representatives ran through the nearly 300 separate sunset resolutions in quick succession, without serious consideration. Many representatives left the chamber, giving their young pages instructions on how to vote for them on each resolution. In the Senate, however, the sunset resolutions were held hostage as part of a filibuster over an unrelated issue. The Senate spent days stalled by largely irrelevant debate and endless roll-call votes on each resolution. Meanwhile, under the sunset law, the House couldn't take up any other business until the Senate had finished voting on all the sunset resolutions. The result was all too predictable.

"The House of Representatives did little more than play checkers and listen to a sermon as it waited for the Senate to catch up on consideration of sunset resolutions," the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported. "For those not interested in checkers, Rep. Joe Carothers of Dotham offered to give domino lessons in the lounge, but his new box of dominoes was missing the blank-two."

In the end, even Common Cause admits, "very few detailed evaluations were prepared and the information that was assembled was not used to change statutes or adjust budgets." A few agencies were axed, but all were "paper" boards that had ceased functioning long ago. Any active agency had "enough supporters lobbying to prevent it from being terminated," explained Rep. James R. Solomon, Jr. The sunset farce disillusioned some legislators. One rounded up 24 cosponsors for a bill to repeal the law. "I don't relish the thought of going back to my constituents and explaining to them why we wasted the session," said Senator Bingham Edwards. Sunset, he said, is a "monster."

Common Cause has tried to characterize Alabama's experience as unique-

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Full Disclosure

Despite the dismal track record of sunset legislation thus far, Common Cause continues to promote it in the state legislatures and in Congress. In these forums, Common Cause spokesmen say they're unsurprised that state laws have brought only miniscule cutbacks of agencies or programs, because terminating agencies isn't the point.

"I know that for some, sunset can mean a means of paring government down, of perhaps trying to reduce it in large amounts," Common Cause President David Cohen told the Senate Rules Committee last year. "But for us, it is a question of how to get evaluation into the system." Cohen said sunset deadlines are merely "a procedural discipline to get the job done." Common Cause's sunset lobbyist, Bruce Adams, told a meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures, "Sunset is more of a 'yes, but' than a 'yes or no' process. Through sunset, the legislature says to most agencies: 'Yes, you will continue, but you are going to shape up.'"

But Common Cause is not above exploiting the anti-Big Government feeling that gives sunset its popularity. In a direct-mail fund-raising appeal sent out this year, Common Cause boasts of its sunset efforts, and states that abolishing agencies is indeed the point. "Yes," reads the red, white, and blue brochure, "only when the sun sets on inflation-causing regulations, tax-money wasting agencies, and strangling bureaucratic duplication, will you and all taxpayers find relief from the intense heat of inflation and taxation. Common Cause is fighting hard to hasten the hour of that sunset."

ly awful—an example of backward Southern foolishness, perhaps. But in other states where sunset laws have had time to show results, the results—while not as bad as in Alabama or Colorado—show that the laws have not had much impact, either.

In South Dakota, nine agencies were scheduled for sunset last year. The legislature abolished just one, the state athletic commission.

In Nebraska, the sunset law scheduled six regulatory agencies for termination in 1978. The legislature reestablished them all with few changes.

In Oklahoma last year, 12 of the 21 agencies up for review were eliminated, but the 12 were "very minor, very insignificant agencies," according to James H. Johnson, director of the legislative staff.

In Louisiana, four of the state's 20 departments were scheduled to die this year, but the legislature reestablished all of them.

The sunset provisions in Georgia were "torpedoed" by special interests, according to the *Atlanta Journal.* The legislature reestablished all ten licensing boards scheduled for termination in 1978, despite critical reports by the state auditor's office, which had spent about $90,000 reviewing the boards. "I think, for the most part, we've wasted our time," one auditor told reporters.

Finally, in Oregon, sunset hasn't yet gone through a full cycle of agency reviews—but so far the costs are outweighing the supposed benefits. To evaluate the nine occupational licensing boards up for termination in 1980, for example, the legislature has hired five new full-time researchers and spent $200,000. Sunset hearings have been attended almost solely by board members and their licensees, who have used the occasion to introduce bills that would not only reestablish the boards, but also expand their power to restrict business competition.

In sum, state sunset laws have not brought about the demise of one agency or program of any significant size. Only a few tiny, mostly moribund boards—some of which existed only on paper—have been abolished. Some agencies have been reestablished with expanded regulatory powers and enlarged budgets to match. Meanwhile, a new and expensive bureaucracy of accountants and management "experts" has sprung up to audit and evaluate the agencies. Their evaluations generally have been ignored and often have cost the taxpayers more than the agencies themselves.

The evidence suggests that legislators vote for sunset laws to show they're doing *something* to curb Big Government. But when the time comes for the sun to set, they reestablish agencies without much thought, or find a few tiny boards whose authority can be reassigned or abolished without arousing much opposition. Perhaps it is because legislators are unprepared and ill equipped for the tiresome, time-consuming work of evaluating large and complex programs, or perhaps it is because they are unwilling. Whatever the reason, one thing is clear: sunset hasn't worked. ■

Analyzing Presidents:

From Passive-Positive Taft to Active-Positive Carter

by JAMES DAVID BARBER

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The Hottest Issue in Washingtor

by Joseph Nocera

"This is the most sensitive subject in government right now," said Edwin Sullivan with only a trace of a smile, and he leaned back in his soft yellow chair. We were sitting by a sofa and coffee table at the far end of his large, comfortable office, the kind of office the government bestows only upon its most powerful people. His desk, at the other end of the room, was cluttered with papers, indicating he was also a very busy man, so busy that it was close to 6:00 p.m., well after most of the other people in the building had gone home, when he was finally able to squeeze me in for an interview. Formally, Edwin Sullivan is Director of the Office of Management Services at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. But to the people at HEW, he is known mostly as the man in charge of parking—which was the subject of our interview.

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Joseph Nocera is an editor of The Washington Monthly. *He was assisted in the research for this article by Howie Kurtz, a reporter for* The Washington Star.

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sacrifices to save gas. Therefore, the President announced, in order to get more federal employees out of their gas-guzzling cars and onto energy-efficient mass transit systems, there would be *no more free parking* in federal lots.

Men like Sullivan, it turned out, had known for seven months that this edict was in the works; you don't get to be an important man in government without developing a few sources in the Office of Management and Budget, which had orchestrated the paid parking coup. But, in the interest of national security perhaps, they had kept their mouths shut. The rest of the government, meanwhile, was taken by surprise. The day after Carter's speech the Washington papers printed the gory details Carter hadn't mentioned. Starting in October federal parking spaces, which had always cost between nothing and $15 a month, would now be worth half of whatever the going rate was in private garages in the area. Two years later, in October 1981, even that break would be taken away. At that point, the papers said, the federal employees who drove to work would have to pay *the same as everybody else,* which in downtown Washington could mean up to $70 a month. Overnight, about 130,000 parking spaces all over the country, including about 30,000 in the Washington area, were suddenly set to go from being the most coveted, valuable, jealously-guarded, fought-over perquisites in the government to just another expensive slab of asphalt.

And it wasn't only the big downtown agencies that were affected. Carter's plan applied to the suburban offices of the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Energy in isolated Germantown. At National Airport, airport employees who had been renting parking spaces in the jam-packed lots from the FAA for $15 a year (that's $1.25 a month, 31 cents a week or six cents a day) would feel the effect.

Even on Capitol Hill, where "Freedom of Parking" has always been a cherished part of Congress' own special bill of rights, there were rumblings, and like all rumblings these were ominous. Although the 9,000 spaces Congress has reserved for itself and its staff were exempt from the Carter edict, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill said it only seemed fair that congressional parking should be paid for by someone besides the taxpayer. Of course, he added, it wouldn't affect him since a government car is leased in his name by Congress—that comes with being Speaker—and it wouldn't make much sense to have the government pay to park its own car. But for

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the congressional staff aide, who, like his colleague in the federal bureaucracy, has come to see his subsidized parking space as a vital and necessary part of being a devoted public servant, well, as one of them (salary: $40,000) put it to me on the deepest of deep background, "I'm bitter. And I'll be even more bitter if I ever have to pay for parking."

Now I know what you're thinking at this point. You're thinking: "Who cares if he's bitter?" Plus you're thinking: "Why should my tax dollars (make that my *hard-earned* tax dollars) be spent subsidizing free parking for people who make $40,000 a year?" In fact, you're probably thinking: "Why should my hard-earned tax dollars be spent so *anyone* in the government can park for free?" Let's face it, a lot of unkind thoughts are running through your mind.

How do I know this? I know it because these are exactly the same thoughts that ran through my mind when I first jumped into this story. I'll admit I was skeptical of arguments in favor of free parking. Reporters are trained to be skeptical, of course, and I do my best. But I also try to go to work every morning with an open mind, ready to judge fairly and impartially any argument I hear during the day, and it was in this spirit that I began to call around to the various outposts of the bureaucracy to find out how the new parking policy was getting along.

Starting Trouble

It was obvious I had struck a nerve when early on I called the Postal Service to find out if they would be abiding by Carter's edict, and the secretary who answered the phone said, "What are you trying to do, start trouble?" The answer to my question, though, was less than clear, since the Post Office, because of its "independent" status, is exempt from the order. "We are currently analyzing the situation," said a spokesman. "By the time the President's plan goes into effect, we will have a firm policy." He declined to say whether the firm policy would mean free or paid parking. At the Federal Reserve, also exempt, there was also no decision on whether parking would be paid by employees, although I was reassured when the p.r. man told me, "It's under active study. I'm in daily contact with the man in charge."

It soon became clear that the decision to stop subsidized employee parking was all too typical of what was wrong with Carter's presidency. For two years he has been president, yet he still didn't understand the ways of Washington. One of the first and most important lessons Washington has to teach is that free federal parking, as any bureaucrat could tell him, is directly related to the morale and productivity of the federal employee. The idea of charging bureaucrats for their parking spaces has been kicking around since 1972, but it had never been proposed seriously. No previous president had dared to broach the subject, all realizing, no doubt, what effect it could have on the running of the government. Carter had made no effort to learn that lesson, either by reading history or by surrounding himself with the kind of bright insiders who could tell him what was going on. As he often does, Carter took what he deemed to be the morally correct position on the issue of free federal parking, never once giving a moment's pause to the controversy it would stir, or the kind of trade-offs that would ensue, or the politicking that would be needed to make it work.

Nowhere was the failure of Carter's presidency better illuminated than with this revelation: when he first decided to bring the paid parking proposal out of the closet, Carter wanted to put it in force *right away*. How naive could he be? Luckily, the lawyers at OMB and the White House got to him before he could do anything so foolish and worked out a more broad-based approach. Now, at least, the White House is proposing paid parking with all the complicating flourishes it merits, including an 11-page, 11-point OMB draft circular that

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lists the reasoning behind the changes, explains how the Carter plan is supposed to work, and has a few pages of questions and answers at the end. ("Q. If an agency location has an abundance of parking spaces, how will employees have an incentive to form carpools? A. Agency facility managers will allocate spaces near work site entrances to carpools and organize carpool matching programs. Physical reductions in parking space may be considered in some circumstances if a demonstrated increase in carpooling is not realized.") After the circular has circulated, it will be commented upon by all the agencies and federal employee unions; then draft regulations will be drafted by GSA and OMB, which will be duly circulated and commented upon; after which final implementing regulations will be finalized and implemented. These regulations, of course, will be full of contingencies, exceptions, thresholds, and exemptions. After which, in all likelihood, the federal employee unions will sue. Now we're talking.

The Parking Czar

But despite the with-it bureaucratic lingo of the draft circular, it is still a document full of Carteresque naivete. For example, it says that paid parking for federal employees shall be implemented *without adding more personnel.* This, apparently, was a blow to Edwin Sullivan and parking officials throughout the government. How could they be expected to do all these new things, collecting money and so forth, without more staff? "I'm understaffed as it is," Sullivan explained. He has to get by with only one man on parking full time, whose job it is to call up people listed on the carpool forms to find out if they are really in the carpools, and two guards who man the garages. "I'm going to comment on that one, you can be sure," he said.

There is also an underlying assumption in the circular that setting up the mechanics of a paid parking lot is relatively simple. I was disabused of this notion by Jay Cohen, a bald, cigar-chomping, Henny Youngman-like character who holds down the parking desk at GSA. In government circles, I am told, they call Cohen "The Parking Czar." Unlike Sullivan, who has other chores in addition to his parking responsibilities, Cohen's life revolves around government parking—he eats and sleeps parking maps and garage blueprints and average monthly rates. He is the one who is going to be the most responsible for putting out the new regulations. (Before early April, Cohen was a stirring defender of the parking subsidies. "The individual employees pay $10 to $15 a month in fees," he was wont to say. "We're not giving the stuff away." If you tried to point out the obvious generosity embodied in these rates, Cohen would bristle. "Where do you park?" he would say. "I'll bet your company pays for your parking." After the Carter announcement, though, Cohen saw the light. "People will pay," he told *The Washington Post*. "You know, it's 'Take my wife, please, but don't take my parking space.'")

Cohen described to me the challenge he faces: "This is new ground, this is virgin territory. These are uncharted waters. Nobody in government has ever set up a system before like we're going to have to set up. Nobody has ever had to worry about government-wide collection of moneys. Nobody."

Still, Cohen and Sullivan seemed confident their problems are solvable. They complained, but it seemed to me they were at least making molehills out of molehills. To find the mountain-makers, I walked over to the big parking lot near the Commerce Department, and spoke with the employees driving up in their cars, who seemed to regard the OMB draft circular as the moral equivalent of war. Coming in for special abuse was the last Q and A in the document, which I will quote in its entirety:

"Q. How can I explain to my employees that this policy will be in their best interests?"

"A. There are several aspects to this. First of all, we should remember that

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many employees already use transit or pay to park, or work at locations which have parking spaces with low economic value. These employees will not be directly affected. It is expected that a good number of attractive parking spaces now used by single occupant cars will now become available for carpools. This will benefit those employees who have not been able to qualify for government parking. Also, the individual in the carpool will only face one third or one fourth of the parking fee where a fee is in effect, and avoid the cost of driving his or her car at the same time."

This explanation seemed reasonable to me. It said, if I understood it correctly, that if you're in a carpool with three other people and your space costs $40 a month, you end up paying only ten bucks a month, or $2.50 a week, or 50 cents a day. That's still cheaper than taking the bus. If you're a government big-wig and you want to keep a solo space in the VIP garage, then you're going to have to pay the full price, which you certainly can afford on your government big-wig salary. What could be more fair?

But a different sort of "fairness" was on the minds of many of the employees in the parking lot. As one woman told me while she walked from her car, "I waited a long time for that space and now they tell me I have to pay for it. It's just not fair." Under this definition, which was apparently widely held throughout the federal commuter community, what's fair is not what will create more opportunities for other fellow workers to partake in the luxury of a parking space or a carpool. "Fair" means simply keeping what you've already got.

If you read that Q and A carefully, you'll notice something that was even more troubling to the employees. When Carter made his announcement, he said the reason for paid parking was mainly to save energy. Yet *nowhere* in that draft circular answer is the energy crisis mentioned. Not even once. This was the sort of discrepancy the astute bureaucrats didn't miss. The administration had chosen to forego appeal to their sense of patriotism—and they were suspicious. Maybe the administration had doubts that paid parking would break the OPEC cartel after all. One fellow I spoke to at the National Institutes of Health put it this way: "I'm as patriotic as the next guy, I just don't like getting screwed."

How Do You Spell Lawsuit?

With my reporter's sixth sense, it didn't take long to guess that the great labor statesmen at the American Federation of Government Employees would be busy scheming to find ways to block paid parking. They were. In fact, they had a half-dozen impressive reasons why making employees pay for parking is an irresponsible step. At the top of their list is the burden the plan is going to put upon the lower-paid workers. (Consciousness of this problem appeared to run high among the rank-and-file employees as well, usually expressed like this: "I'm only too happy to pay, but what about my poor secretary, who has to drive 50 miles to and from work and is the sole support of four growing kids and her grandmother.") When I mentioned to the AFGE officials that over 50 per cent of federal employees currently don't get to park in the free lots, and that most of these employees are at the lower end of the pay scale, and that therefore it seemed to me that the union should be in *favor* of paid parking, I was quickly given an insight into the complex nature of labor-management relations in the public sector. "Carter can't change the working conditions of the fucking contract!" an AFGE spokesman said. "He can't do it."

Actually, this argument, for all its elegance, may be right. Under the Civil Service Reform Act, the union says, the president simply cannot make a change in any working conditions, whether they are mentioned in a contract or not, without first negotiating with the union. (Parking is mentioned in about one third of all union contracts, but the question of whether it should be free is not.) The OMB says

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that by reading the union's comments to its draft circular, it satisfies that requirement. This kind of impasse usually spells l-a-w-s-u-i-t. No one seemed to doubt that one way or another, the question of whether federal employees have to pay for parking is going to end up in the courts.

In the meantime, AFGE must content itself with addressing the broader issues raised by the Carter plan. The matter, as a letter I obtained pointed out, is not just paid parking. At stake is nothing less than "the need to attract and retain competent agency employees, the reduction of costly employee turnover, morale, work-force productivity, employee safety, harmonious labor-management relations, fair treatment of all groups of employees and so on. . .rather than merely using federal employees as handy guinea pigs in every presidential experiment, however simplistic and half-baked." I could not miss the implications: it will be a small miracle if another regulation ever gets written again once paid parking is introduced.

After days of exposure to the intricate arguments that make up our national parking debate, I was exhausted and confused. In one breath the union, and the federal employees with whom I spoke, complained that paid parking won't save any gas because everyone will still drive to work; in another they said no one will drive to work because they won't be able to afford it; in a third they argued that mass transit systems all across America will collapse when all the federal employees abandon their cars for the buses and subways.

If there were contradictions in these arguments, I had become convinced, it was only because free parking had come to mean so much to these people that they will go to the most extraordinary lengths not to give it up. In one building at NIH, I have discovered, there is an employee organization that exists solely to protect employee parking rights. Although I suspected that "Free Parking" will not go down in history with other slogans like "Free Sacco and Vanzetti" or "Free Bobby Seale," I was told they had already organized demonstrations in front of the GSA building. Down in Norfolk, I learned of a chief petty officer who has organized a drive, apparently with considerable success, to have federal employees stop making payroll contributions to charity drives and government savings bonds in order to protest the parking policy. In all my conversations on the subject, I heard anger, eloquence, and *passion,* real *passion,* the kind you'd never provoke if you called up the Treasury Department to find out what they've done recently to reduce inflation.

My final tip came from an AFGE spokesman who confided: "If you want to see some mad people, you ought to check out Denver. They're screaming in Denver."

I followed up his lead and soon learned that there are a lot of federal employees in Denver and they all drive solo to work. Denver is one of those cities where everyone loves his car, and where they think that carpools and buses are for sissies. During rush hour Denver drivers have the lowest passenger-per-car ratio in the country. The city is a place where the government's carpool pleas have fallen by the wayside; indeed they are openly scoffed at. And because Denverites love their cars so much, nearly every employer in town offers free parking, including the government and the other big employer in Denver, the Coors brewery.

When I started this article, I would have blindly assumed Denver was a place where imposing a parking fee might really make a difference. But I had become well-schooled in the arguments against the paid parking plan, and it wasn't long before I realized the frightening possibility inherent in the scheme. "How can the federal installations compete with Coors?" asked AFGE's man in Denver. Now it became clear. If the government employees in Denver are forced to pay for parking, they might all give up implementing regulations and brew beer for a living. I'd have to think that one over for a while. ■

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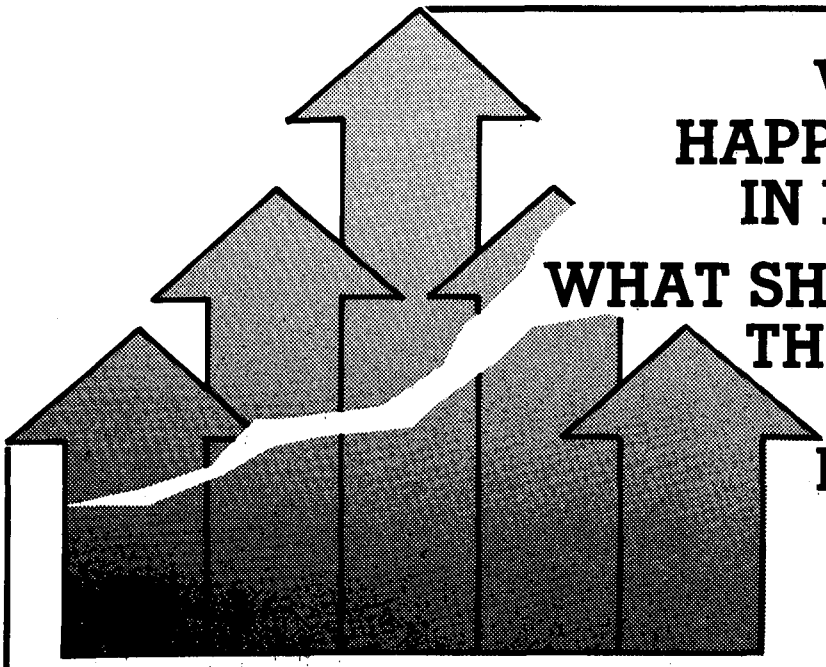

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Richard Reeves on Political Books

"By now I knew I was behaving badly, but I seemed to be possessed. . . . I leaped to my feet, clasping the door handle. It didn't open: we were locked in. I started screaming. The horrified Japanese guard hastily unlocked the door and under the amazed and startled gaze of the officials standing in serried ranks up the stairs bowing, I rushed up, three steps at a time shouting 'Fuck you' at the top of my voice. It wasn't easy to live that one down. . . . The trouble was that I needed direction, not freedom. My outbursts were cries for attention."

That is a sample of the most important political writing in Canada. The author, of course, is Margaret Trudeau, recounting another diplomatic triumph as she traveled the world with her husband, the prime minister, in *Beyond Reason.* The book, a bestseller up north, was published last month in the United States by Paddington Press.

The last line of the book was what interested me. "I don't, I realize, come out of this story very well," the lady writes. "I have tried at least to be honest." Those are words to live by these days—at least to sell by—whether you're poor Maggie Trudeau, or John Dean selling out first his country and then his friends, Betty Ford becoming the most admired woman in America, Henry Ford saying that Ford Motors knew Pintos were deathtraps, Ben Bradlee conversing with Kennedy, Billy Carter doing God-knows-what, or Patrick Anderson and James Fallows hurting or helping Billy's brother.

First, of course, you have to be "a private person." That phrase was defined for me by a woman on the Phil Donahue show who was responding to a question about whether women who have had their breasts surgically reconstructed after a mastectomy should reveal that fact to lovers. "No," she told America, or millions of its citizens. "I've had one and I'd never tell my boyfriend."

(She was only marginally better than an actress named Bonnie Franklin, who was introduced as "a private person" on "America Alive!" and said that she was so private she hadn't had sex for six months.)

Openness has become, or is becoming, the highest value in our society. No alcoholic wants to be anonymous anymore—as Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey discovered to his political benefit when his stumbling and slurring became an issue. Williams just called in *The New York Times* and told them of his stirring battle against the bottle. The voters loved it.

Television, I suppose, is a big part of it. It's become our back fence. When you don't even know who your neighbors are, what do you care about their affairs? Gossip becomes nationalized, and people really do care more about whether Burt Reynolds is going to marry Sally Field, than whether the girl next door is going out with her hairdresser. Beyond that, we live in a changing society—changing perhaps

Richard Reeves is the author of Convention. *His column is a regular feature of* The Washington Monthly.

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from Protestant Republican to Freudian Democracy. Nothing is *wrong* these days, unless. . . .

Unless you try to cover it up—cover up is the new mortal sin.

Which brings me to Margaret Trudeau and Nelson Rockefeller—and to their effect on the next two elections for president of the United States. The question of Mrs. Trudeau is not whether or not the dashing American she coupled with in her book is Edward Kennedy. I can't believe anyone cares about that. But the success of her book, at least in Canada, has set some sort of precedent in North American politics, and book publishers are born imitators. I know at least three of them who would sell their children for a Joan Kennedy book.

Rockefeller is still interesting because of the press reaction to the gamier aspects of his death. I would have thought the press would have ignored the lady in the next apartment—hell, most of us knew all about Rocky's lustiness for years. But most of the reporters I have talked with about the press riot over the circumstances of Rockefeller's death, justified their zeal by saying his staff was trying to cover up.

So, if Teddy Kennedy becomes a candidate for president in 1980 or 1984, the question will not be what he did at Chappaquidick, but what he did after the drowning of that girl. Hundreds of reporters will be trying to uncover the cover up. And no matter what majority of Americans tell pollsters they are not concerned about what happened that July day, they may change their minds if Kennedy is shown covering up. What did he know and when did he know it?

I often wonder if that isn't the real reason Kennedy sounds like a candidate one day and Jimmy Carter's campaign manager the next. Maybe he figures that by 1984, America won't be such an open society. ■

political book notes

Public affairs books to be published in June

Access to Ambulatory Care and the U.S. Economy. Frank A. Sloan, Judith D. Bentkover. Lexington, $16.95.

Air Pollution, Human Health, and Public Policy. Charles T. Stewart, Jr. Lexington, $15.50.

The Anti-Nuclear Handbook. Stephen Croall, Kaianders. Pantheon, $2.95.

The Bakke Case: The Politics of Inequality. Joel Dreyfuss, Charles Lawrence III. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $8.95.

Bay Of Pigs: The Untold Story. Peter Wyden. Simon & Schuster, $11.95. Thanks to the wondrous effect of the Freedom of Information Act, the Church committee, and the passage of time, it is now becoming possible to know the complete story behind the greatest disaster of the Kennedy administration—the Bay of Pigs, an operation planned and conducted with stunning incompetence and ending in abject failure. Peter Wyden has done an admirable job of sifting through all the documents on the subject (including quite a few recently declassified ones) and has gotten an impressive series of interviews with such usually reticent people as Dean Rusk, the Bundy brothers, the Rostow brothers, and Richard Helms. The resulting book is written clumsily, in a Jim Bishop-style, moment-by-moment narrative (complete with Bishop-esque irrelevant details, such as "By Saturday, April 8, Washington's celebrated cherry blossoms were in bloom"), but it is certainly the most complete account of the Bay of Pigs yet published.

The Bay of Pigs was the brainchild of the

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CIA, which, in 1960—with only the haziest sort of go-ahead from Eisenhower—started contemplating the assassination of Fidel Castro, enlisting the aid of such worthies as Robert Maheu, Sam Giancana, John Rosselli, and Santo Trafficante, beaming radio propaganda into Cuba—and recruiting and training guerrillas from among the bitter Cuban emigre population of Miami.

When John Kennedy took office, plans for an invasion of Cuba were already well under way, and Kennedy was on record as supporting toughness in foreign policy generally, and Cuban "fighters for freedom" in particular. He also made the mistake of keeping on Eisenhower's CIA director, Allen Dulles, and Dulles' deputy director for plans, Richard Bissel, both of whom were ardent supporters of the operation, willing to mislead the President if that would mean his approving it. Kennedy had enough sense to ask the Joint Chiefs of Staff to evaluate the CIA's plans, but the CIA gilded the lily considerably when briefing the chiefs, and the chiefs gilded it even further in making their report to the President. So Kennedy made all his decisions about the Bay of Pigs on the basis of a badly over-inflated picture of the operation's chances of success.

The impression that shines through this book is that Kennedy knew the invasion was a bad idea but was afraid that canceling it would show his military and intelligence agencies that he was soft. So, rather than face the issue squarely, he waffled and postponed; and rather than argue out its pluses and minuses among people he trusted, he let people he didn't trust bamboozle him while subtly encouraging the others to keep quiet.

There were only two important meetings in the spring of 1961 about the Bay of Pigs. In the first, the planners of the operation dominated, and Dulles skillfully played on Kennedy's fear of failure by warning him that if he called off the operation it would mean the already trained guerrillas would be "wandering around the country telling the country what they have been doing." In the second meeting, Kennedy assembled a more reliable crew, but made sure that he wouldn't get any useful advice from them by going around the room and demanding from everyone present a simple go or no-go opinion. The two men high in the administration who were not obsessed with the fear of appearing soft—Adlai Stevenson and Chester Bowles—pointedly had no role in the deliberations. Stevenson was kept in the dark throughout, and Bowles' memorandum opposing the invasion never made it past Dean Rusk's desk.

When Kennedy finally made the crucial decisions about the invasion, he made them in solitude and gave his orders over the phone. Alone in his office, he called Bissel and told him to cut back the planned level of air support for the operation; alone again, he called Bissel and told him to start the invasion; and alone at his country house, he called Rusk and canceled a second air strike at the landing site, thereby completely assuring the operation's failure.

The only good that came out of the fiasco was that Kennedy learned some lessons that helped him deal more successfully with the biggest crisis of his administration. By the time he discovered in October 1962 that the Russians were secretly installing missiles in Cuba, he had effectively communicated to the national security bureaucracy that he did not reward those who lied to him. Dulles had been fired; so had Bissel. And this time, instead of asking his advisers to say yes or no, he cross-examined each of them to bring out their hidden assumptions, their subtle doubts.

He had also broadened the advisory group to include intelligent non-experts like his brother. Indeed, Robert Kennedy's role in the Cuban missile crisis was to be crucial. He was the one adviser who had no need to fear the President. And the President had no need to fear him. Bobby could be trusted to be completely candid, and trusted as well to be completely discreet, to never reveal anything that would embarrass the President. Thus he was given the most sensitive task of the entire negotiations, letting Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin know that we were going to pull our missiles out of Turkey. This gave Khruschev the quid he needed for all the quo he was having to swallow. But Kennedy was so anxious to *appear* tough that he did not want anyone to know about the assurance to Dobrynin—indeed, he denounced Adlai Stevenson for suggesting such a course—so it is hard to imagine that he would have trusted anyone but Robert Kennedy with the secret that, in his heart, he was a dove. What, for example, would have happened if Kennedy had had to ask Rusk, who was telling everyone that "we were eyeball to eyeball and the other guy blinked," to tell Dobrynin that we were blinking too?

What Kennedy hadn't learned from the

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Bay of Pigs was not to fear letting the public know about his peaceful side. The tragic result was that for years after the Cuban missile crisis, it was seen as a triumph of toughness. And the continuing series of disasters that was our experience in Vietnam was then justified on the grounds that we were demonstrating our "resolve." One wonders about the lives that could have been saved if after the missile crisis Kennedy had told the truth about his dovish gesture. Maybe then he could have told the public—and the public would have been ready to hear—what he in fact told only two men: that he thought Vietnam was a mistake and planned to pull out after the 1964 election.

—Nicholas Lemann and Charles Peters

Breaktime: Living Beyond the Work Ethic in America. Bernard Lefkowitz. Hawthorn, $12.95.

Confession and Avoidance. Leon Jaworski with Mickey Herskowitz. Doubleday, $12.95. An engaging memoir, mostly about the non-Watergate aspects of the special prosecutor's life. There are, however, a few pages of new material on Watergate, including the author's revelation that he thinks it was Nixon who erased the tapes. Jaworski, who is not known by his fellow prosecutors for his instinct for the jugular, admits that during the Koreagate hearings he suppressed evidence that a high-ranking White House assistant under Ford had taken money from Honcho Kim.

—C.P.

Congress and the Bureaucracy: A Theory of Influence. R. Douglas Arnold. Yale, $15.95.

Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century. Richard Edwards. Basic, $12.95.

Controlling Social Expenditures: The Search for Output Measures. Alfred S. Eichner, Charles Brecher. Allanheld Osmun, $23.50.

Enterprise. Jerry Gray. Morrow, $10.95.

The FBI Pyramid: From the Inside. Mark Felt. Putnam, $12.50.

The Future of United States Naval Power. James A. Nathan, James K. Oliver. Indiana, $15.

Hitler vs. Roosevelt: The Undeclared Naval War. Thomas A. Bailey, Paul B. Ryan. Macmillan, $12.95.

Japanese Direct Foreign Investment. Sueo Sekiguchi. Allanheld Osmun, $20.

Jimmy Carter: The Man and the Myth. Victor Lasky. Marek, $12.50.

Justice and Reverse Discrimination. Alan H. Goldman. Princeton, $16.50/$3.95.

Lightning Joe: An Autobiography. General J. Lawton Collins. Louisiana State, $14.

The Main Chance. Jules Witcover. Viking, $9.95. Fiction.

The Making of the Popes 1978: The Politics of Intrigue in the Vatican. Andrew M. Greeley. Andrews and McMeel, $12.95. A fascinating day-by-day account of the politicking that took place in the Vatican during last year's Papal elections. Greeley is one of the few American journalists who is interested in (indeed, obsessed by) Vatican politics, and Papal elections are his big chance to strut his stuff, which he does with obvious delight. Unlike the stories that were written at the time of the elections of the two John Pauls, you won't read much in this book about divine inspiration or men deep in prayer. Greeley sees Vatican elections for what they are: political struggles fought by men who may be Cardinals but are also, to some degree or other, politicians. Greeley shows us who's doing what to whom, who's lining up blocks of votes, who's being blackballed, who the leading candidates and the powers are as the Cardinals prepare to find a new Pope. Great stuff, really, and if there's one big flaw in the book it is not with Greeley's material but with his diary format, which allows him to tell us much more than we care to hear about himself ("My sinuses are completely out of hand, and I seem not to have brought enough sinus pills") in between all the gossip about Papal candidates.

For any student of international bureaucracy, Greeley's description of the Vatican version will ring especially true. He says the people who run the Vatican are thoroughly incompetent, out of touch with the world and the Church, and more interested in what goes on inside their building than in how their policies are affecting the Church.

—Joseph Nocera

Martha: A Biography of Martha Mitchell. Winzola McLendon. Random House, $12.95. This is a bad book. It lacks style, organization, and intelligence. But it is full

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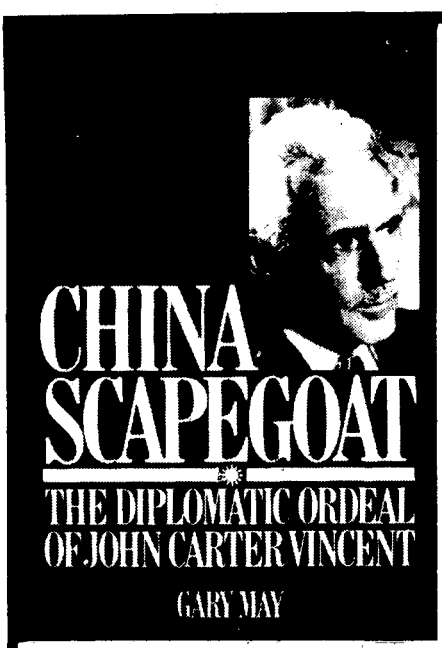

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of haunting detail about the nightmare of the Nixon years and about a woman who makes you want to stand up and fight for Women's Lib. Why did she stay married to John Mitchell? "I've never had any faith in myself. I've never felt I could make it alone." After she returned from the California trip during which she had been beaten, injected, and imprisoned (because she might find out or say too much about the Watergate story that was emerging), she told the author, "I want you to make a promise Winny. Anytime you don't hear from me for a full day, if you can't find me, don't ask John where I am... phone the police and then tell the press."

—*C.P.*

Merchants of Grain. Dan Morgan. Viking, $14.95. A good book by one of Washington's most underrated reporters. Morgan, who covers multinational corporations for *The Washington Post,* has done an impressive job of penetrating the veil of secrecy that surrounds the five giant (and family-owned) companies that dominate the world grain trade. Historically, the grain companies, and food policy in general, have been vastly underreported, so Morgan's work is especially admirable for his willingness to write about an "unsexy," albeit important, topic.

His last few chapters, in particular, attempt to analyze how the culture of the grain companies and American food export policy have combined to hurt, rather than help, the countries receiving millions of dollars' worth of American grain. For anyone who wants to understand the failures of noble-sounding ventures like the "Food for Peace" program this is the place to start.

—*J.N.*

Money Rush. Andrew Duncan. Doubleday, $10.95.

Of Grass and Snow: The Secret Criminal Elite. Hank Messick. Prentice-Hall, $9.95.

One Man, One Voice. Charles Morgan. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $12.95.

Phoenix. Amos Aricha, Eli Landau. NAL, $9.95/$2.50. Fiction

Playing the Private College Admissions Game. Richard Moll. Times, $12.95.

The Politics of Energy. Barry Commoner. Knopf, $10/$4.95.

Private Urban Renewal: A Different Residential Trend. Eileen Zeitz. Lexington, $14.95.

Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination. Catherine MacKinnon. Yale, $22.50/$5.95.

Shutdown: Nuclear Power on Trial. Matthew McClure, ed. Book Publishing Co., $4.95.

A Time to Heal. Gerald R. Ford. Harper & Row, $12.95. The President who used to make his own breakfast in the White House has now written his own book, and the result is sadly predictable: it is long, ponderous, and dull. Ford comes across as an honest and decent man, at peace with himself and his accomplishments, but even culling that much from *A Time to Heal* requires reading heavily between the lines.

The book is a flat and uninspired recitation of all the events that took place during his vice presidency and presidency (special emphasis on Watergate, natch), but only when writing about Nixon does Ford tell stories worth repeating. He describes, for example, one meeting between Nixon and Benton Becker, a lawyer he sent to San Clemente to tell Nixon that a pardon was in the works: "Nixon seemed exhausted. 'You've been a fine young man,' he told Becker. 'You've been a gentleman. We've had enough bullies....I want to give you something. But look around the office. I don't have anything any more. They took everything away from me.'

"Becker looked uncomfortable. 'That's all right, Mr. President,' he began.

"'No, no, no,' Nixon went on, 'I asked Pat to get these for me.' He opened a desk drawer and pulled out two little boxes containing cuff links and a tie pin. 'She got these out of my own jewelry box. There aren't any more in the entire world.'"

—*J.N.*

Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin. Richard L. Bushman et al. Little, Brown, $15.

Why War?: Ideology, Theory, and History. Keith L. Nelson, Spencer C. Olin, Jr. University of California, $10.95.

The Witness Who Spoke With God and Other Tales From the Courthouse. Milton S. Gould. Viking, $12.95. Fiction.

The Women Say, the Men Say: Women's Liberation and Men's Consciousness. Evelyn Shapiro, Barry Shapiro. Delacorte, $14.95/$8.95.

World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond. Herman Kahn. Morrow, $7.95.

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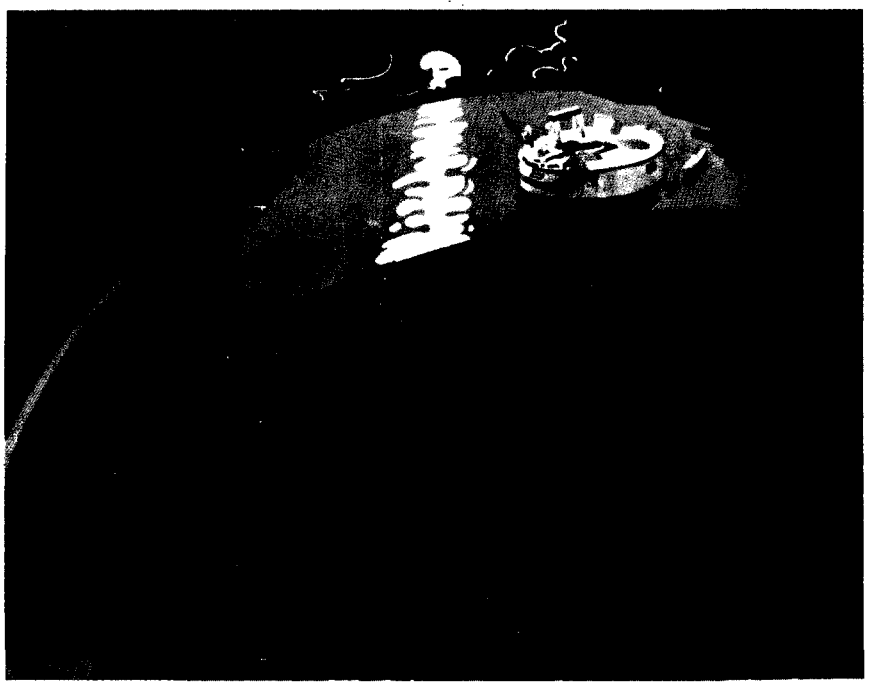

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